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PENINGTON, ISAAC

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SELECT PIECES ON
RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS

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DATE:

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Concerning the worship of the living God: The everlasting
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concerning some of the weighty things relating to
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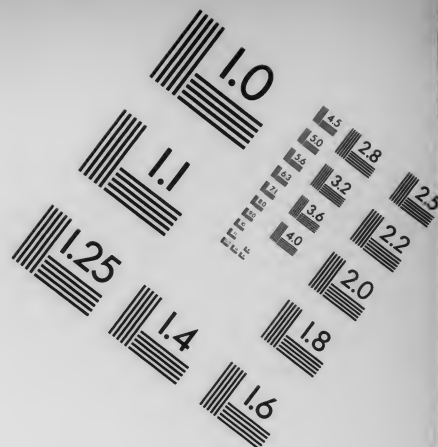
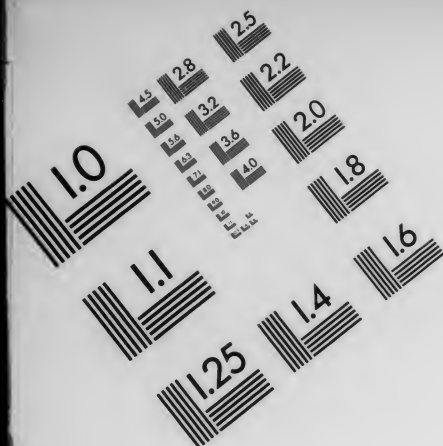


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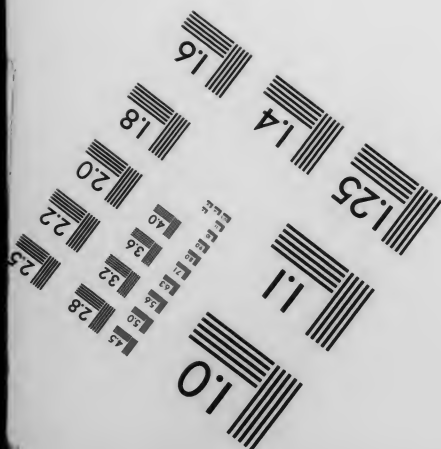
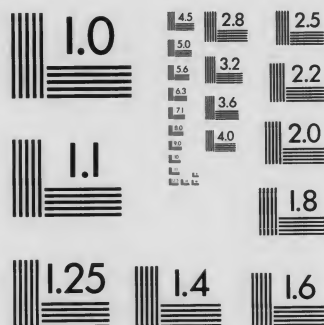
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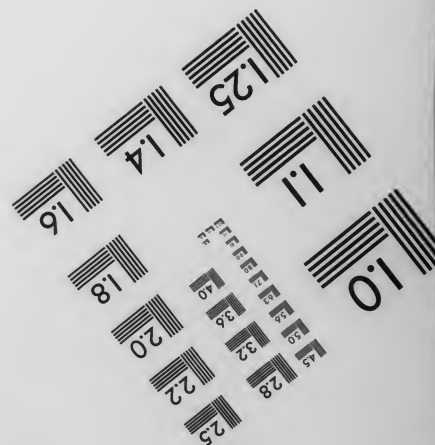
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No 5.

SELECT PIECES
ON
RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS,

FIRST PUBLISHED

ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE
LAST CENTURY.

BY

ISAAC PENINGTON.

LONDON:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY JAMES PHILLIPS, IN GEORGE
YARD, LOMBARD STREET.

MDCCCLXXVI.

P R E F A C E.

THE author of the following pieces lived and wrote about the middle of the last century, when the nation was involved in the calamities of a civil war, and when all human security of property or life was exceedingly precarious: but a nobler warfare occupied his mind, and that in the early part of his life; a warfare against every thing that had a tendency to captivate the heart; to bind it to the earth, and earthly pursuits; to estrange his soul from God, and deprive it of an habitation amongst the sons of the Most High. He fought this good fight, and was enabled to overcome through many and deep sufferings, and inherits, we doubt not, the crown of immortal life.

During the course of a long and laborious life, it was his endeavour to awaken others to a sense of their highest interests; and being himself thoroughly persuaded, by experience, of the dangers that attend us in this state of probation, of the need we have of help from above, and the certainty of its being afforded to those who truly seek it; he ceased not to call unto others, and to tell them what God had done for his soul, and would do for all,

who looked in good earnest for a better country.

Though the present age, it is to be feared, is too generally estranged from considerations of this nature; yet there is a desire raised in the hearts of many, of different persuasions, after the things that make for their peace. To such, we doubt not, the following treatises will be acceptable, as therein they will meet with much instruction, caution, and encouragement.

As our author was indefatigable in promoting the great cause of truth and righteousness, he wrote much, either as particular or general causes occurred. After his decease his works were collected, and published, first, in one volume folio, and lately in two volumes quarto. These, however, are all dispersed, and a new edition has been desired, for general benefit, by many serious people. In the mean time it was thought, that if a few tracts were selected and published by themselves, they would afford an opportunity to many of judging of the nature of this author's writings, previous to a new edition of his works which is intended to be published.

A N

A N
E P I S T L E
T O A L L
S E R I O U S P R O F E S S O R S
O F T H E
C H R I S T I A N R E L I G I O N :
W H E R E I N

A BRIEF TOUCH of my Knowledge, Sense, Belief, and Experience concerning the Godhead, the Offering up of the Lord JESUS CHRIST in his Body on the Tree, as a Propitiatory Sacrifice to the FATHER, and the Imputation of his Righteousness to those who believe in his Name and Power, is nakedly laid before them; wherein I am not alone, but one with those who have so learned and experienced the same in the Leadings and Light of his HOLY SPIRIT.

Written in Love to them, that they might have the better Understanding of us, as to these Things, and might not think otherwise either of us, or of the Truth of our God, which we bear witness to, than there is Cause, to their own Hurt and Prejudice.

ISAAC PENINGTON.

A N
E P I S T L E
T O A L L
S E R I O U S P R O F E S S O R S , &c.

F R I E N D S ,

A F T E R it pleased the Lord to touch my heart with the sense of his truth, and to manifest unto me the principle of his life, in the demonstration and power of his own Spirit, inasmuch as I could reason, dispute, consider about it no longer, but was fully satisfied concerning it; I say, after this, the love of God sprang in me towards you, and pure desires and breathings unto him, that ye also might have the way cast up before you, and might so walk therein, as to come to partake of the same mercy and salvation. How I have mourned before the Lord for you, and desired that the stumbling-blocks might be removed from you, and that ye might so seek as to obtain (not in that wisdom and disputing mind, which still is shut out; but in that meekness, humility, and fear which gives entrance) the Lord God knoweth. Yea, the desires in me after you are still living; who knoweth, but the Lord may at length hear, and with his key so open your hearts, and so anoint your eyes with his eye-salve, that ye may see, acknowledge, believe in, and receive the beloved of your souls, even as he now appears, after the long
B 2 night

night of darkness, a comforter of the drooping spirits of his people, with the pure light of life, wherein the redeemed house of Jacob (who sat in darkness, and in the valley of the shadow of death, mourning after him) now in holy rejoicing, and pure joy of spirit; walk before him? Oh! the Lord God visit you, and break in upon you, as he hath done upon us, and cause you to set to your seals also, as we could not but do, that this is he whom all our days we waited for, and longed after. And now there are two or three things in my heart to open to you, how it is with me in reference to them; for indeed I have not been taught to deny any testimony the scriptures hold forth, concerning the Lord Jesus, or any of his appearances, but am taught by the Lord more certainly and fully to own and acknowledge them.

The first is concerning the Godhead, which we own as the scriptures express it, and as we have the sensible, experimental knowledge of it. In which, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one," 1 John v. 7. This I believe from my heart, and have infallible demonstrations of; for I know three, and feel three in spirit, even an eternal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, which are but one eternal God. And I feel them also one, and have fellowship with them (through the tender mercy of the Lord) in their life, and in their redeeming power. And here I lie low before the Lord in the sensible life, not desiring to know and comprehend notionally, but to feel the thing inwardly, truly, sensibly, and effectually; yea, indeed, this is to me far beyond what I formerly knew notionally concerning them, and I cannot but invite others hither.

Now consider seriously, if a man from his heart believe thus concerning the eternal Power and Godhead; that the Father is God, the Word God, the Holy

Holy Spirit God, and that these are one eternal God, waiting so to know God, and to be subject to him accordingly; is not this man in a right frame of heart towards the Lord in this respect? Indeed, friends, we do know God sensibly and experimentally to be a Father, Word, and Spirit, and we worship the Father in the Son by his own Spirit, and here meet with the seal of acceptance with him. Nor would we contend with you about your crimes in this respect, but that ye provoke us thereunto, in laying to our charge as if we denied the thing; whereas we do not, nor can deny the expressions which the scripture useth, nor our own sense and experience concerning the thing. I pray let this suffice, and let us all strive to know God (and his Son Jesus Christ) in his life, spirit, and power, wherein is unity and true demonstration; and not contend about such expressions concerning things, as are beside the scriptures. For would not ye yourselves think it hard (I mean such of you as read the scriptures seriously, desiring to understand and observe what is written therein) to have a belief of things imposed on you otherwise than is there written, and otherwise than ye have the sense, knowledge, and experience of them from the Lord?

The second is concerning the offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, without the gates of Jerusalem. I do exceedingly honour and esteem that offering, believing it had relation to the sins of the whole world, and was a propitiatory sacrifice to the Father therefore. And surely he that is redeemed out of the world up to God by Christ, cannot deny that Christ was his ransom, and that he was bought with a price, and therefore is to glorify God with his body and spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And, saith the apostle Peter, "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, &c. but

"but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. "who so offered himself up to God through the eternal spirit," Heb. ix. 14. This we do own singly and nakedly, as in the sight of the Lord; though I must confess we do not lay the whole stress upon that which is outward and visible (though we truly and fully acknowledge it in its place), but upon that which is inward and invisible; upon the inward life, the inward power, the spirit within; knowing and experiencing daily, that that is it which doth the work. The outward flesh is not the meat indeed, nor the outward blood the drink indeed; but it is the spirit, the life, the substance, which the birth that is born of the spirit feeds upon and lives by. Oh! consider seriously, and wait on the Lord, rightly to understand that scripture, John vi. 63. "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." What doth this scripture lay the stress upon? Is it not upon the quickening spirit, and the words which the quickening spirit speaketh to the soul, which are living, and give life to those that hear them? "Hear, and your soul shall live!" Hear his voice who giveth life, and your souls shall live by him; but can any one live without hearing the voice of him, who alone is able to quicken and raise the soul from death, and out of the grave of sin?

The third thing is concerning the imputation of Christ's righteousness, to such as believe in his name and power, which we have felt, witnessed, and own to be thus.

God visits men by the light and power of his Holy Spirit, in their dead and dark estate, even while they are ungodly. Now, they that feel life, and in the quickenings of life, by the faith which comes

comes from life, turn to the light and power which visits them, by this faith in the power, they are in measure transplanted out of the unholy root, into the holy root, where they partake of the nature and virtue of the true olive-tree; and the mercy of the Lord in and through his Son Jesus Christ, is spread over them, and their iniquities are pardoned, and their transgressions done away for his name sake, and they are reckoned by God, not as in the old root and unholy nature, but that whereon they lay hold by faith, and are in union with, they are reckoned by in the eye of the Lord; and they are accepted and beloved in him in whom they are found, by him who transplanted them there, and ingrafted them thereinto. So that Christ is really theirs, and they his; and what he did for them in his body of flesh is become theirs, and they have the benefit, and reap the sweet fruits of it. And if they sin afterwards, they have an advocate who pleads their cause with the Father, and who breathes livingly upon them again, and quickens faith in them, and gives them to turn from that which ran after them, and overtook them and defiled them. So that in this state of true faith in, and union with, the Son, the fountain is felt set open for sin and for uncleanness, which daily washeth away the pollutions and stains of the mind, which it is liable to in the travelling state.

But now to every faith this doth not belong, but to the faith only which flows from the power of the endless life, and which stands in the power. The faith which is from the power is precious, having a precious nature and virtue in it, and very precious effects flow from it. For it is the substance of things hoped for; it is of a pure nature, which hath dominion, and giveth dominion over the wicked one. There is no overcoming of the saints here; for as it came from the power, so it stands near the power,

power, and engages the power of life against the enemy, and so is still too hard for him. For he that resisteth the enemy in the true faith, still overcomes him, and makes him fly, James iv. 7. But that belief on Christ, and applying his righteousness, which is not of this faith, nor in the true light of life, but according to the creature's apprehensions concerning things, that is not of the same nature with this, nor hath the same virtue, nor produceth the same effects; but notwithstanding such a believing and hoping, men are still in their sins, and they are not washed away from them by the blood of Christ, nor remitted or covered by the spirit of the Lord. And oh! that men were wary, and did take heed in this matter, that they might not miss of true pardon from the Lord, and so find their sins bound by him, in the days of his refreshing others!

For there is a state, wherein there is an imputation of Christ's righteousness to persons reached to by the power of the Lord, and coming up out of the ungodly state, and so a real bringing into the righteousness. For in the true growth the soul daily grows more and more out of its own righteousness, out of the dark, corrupt image, into the righteousness of Christ, and into his pure image. Thus Christ is formed in the hearts of them that truly believe, daily more and more; they receiving him as an heavenly leaven, and giving up to be leavened by him, are changed daily more and more into the newness of spirit, even until they become a new lump, even a lump wholly leavened, so that old things are passed away, and all things become new; that is, not of old Adam any more, but all of God in Christ, all of the new nature and spirit, which is all of it righteous in the sight of God. Now this it is all should labour for and seek after, even the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to find an entrance

entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, that they might really put off the old man with his affections and lusts, and put on the new man; the new man's nature, the new man's image, the new man's spirit, the new man's righteousness, the new man's holiness; that they might have the wedding garment on to be married to Christ in, and might be as a bride prepared for the bridegroom. Oh! it is precious for any one to feel his soul in this state! And who would not travail and wrestle, and strive and watch, and pray and wait, that he might be thus fitted by the spirit of the Lord for his Son Jesus Christ? For, friends, there is a coming under grace, under grace's wing, and out of shame and confusion because of sin, into the glory which is in the pure image; and there is a being changed from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, by the spirit and power of the Lord. Oh! that such as take upon them the profession of Christianity, might feel the power, and wait upon the power, and know what it is to believe in the power, and live in the power; for without this, the oppressed state of Christianity is but dead, and dry, and cold, not having the true living sap and warmth in it. There are great deceits in the world about these things, but he that knoweth the truth, as it is in Jesus, who was visited by the power, gathered to the power, and abides in the power, he hath that with him which anoints his eye and heart, and strengthens them against the most subtle devices and deceits of the transforming spirit. But whoever he be that professeth Christianity, and is not here, he is not safe, but the enemy hath ways of bewitching and deluding him, which he hath not wherewith effectually to withstand and avoid.

Now having nakedly expressed these things unto you, as they are in my heart, there is a question lies before me to propound to you, which deserves

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your serious consideration of, and ability to answer in the sight of the Lord, which is this :

QUEST. Do ye rightly, truly, and fully (as the Lord requireth of you) know, esteem, and honour the Son ? Do ye own him as God hath revealed him in the spirits of his children, since the apostasy ? Do ye feel him as an horn of salvation lifted up there ? Do ye find and experience him revealed within by the Father, as the seed of the woman, bruising the head of the serpent ? Oh ! this is precious knowledge, and the right way of truly knowing him as he came from the Father, lived in obedience to him, suffered for the sins of the whole world, ascended again to the Father, and now sits with him in glory ! For, indeed, it is the chief thing, and that whereon the soul's rest depends, to know and feel him near. Oh ! that we were one here (I mean in the inward sense and acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ), and we should soon be one in the other also !

For we, who are reproachfully by many called QUAKERS, are (for the most part) a people who have much and long sought after the Lord, and after the experimental knowledge of those truths, which are testified of and related in the holy scriptures. We sought not after a new Christ, or a new spirit, or new doctrines concerning Christ or his spirit ; but to know Christ, so as to receive life from him, and to live to him in the life and spirit received from him ; this hath been the single aim and desire of our souls. And if men could with patience consider what we hold forth, and wait till God open their understandings, they would not lay such blame upon us, as they do in many respects, but find that we reverence the scriptures, believing and holding concerning the things of God according as is there expressed, from a true understanding received from the Lord, and in the true light and guidance of his spirit. There is another question springs in my heart
unto

unto you, I beseech you consider of it seriously, perhaps there may be a blessing to you in it.

QUEST. Do ye rightly and weightily consider and embrace that counsel of Christ, Matt. vi. 33. " Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness ? " Do ye mind what Christ likens the kingdom to ? Even a grain of mustard-seed, a pearl hid in a field, a little leaven, a lost piece of silver, &c. Do ye know, and are ye acquainted with that little thing which is like unto these ? And do ye really and rightly seek after it ? Do ye seek it where it is to be found ? Do ye know the place where it is hid ? And do ye take the right way to buy and purchase it ? How is that ? Why, not by outward observation, faith Christ, but by inward sweeping the house ; by keeping the eye upon it, and sweeping out the rubbish that covers it, this is the way to find it, purchase and possess it. Oh ! that ye could all learn thus, and be thus exercised by the spirit of the Lord daily. Surely they that thus seek shall find, and they that thus ask shall have, and they that thus knock, to them the everlasting kingdom shall be opened.

For mark the difference between the state of the law and gospel. The law was a shadow of good things to come. The gospel is a state of enjoyment of the good things shadowed out under the law. The law was a type of the kingdom, of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, which is set up under the gospel. In John's day the kingdom was at hand ; but in the day of Christ's power the kingdom is come. Under the law there was a tabernacle pitched by man ; but under the gospel the true tabernacle and temple is witnessed, which God pitcheth, and not man ; and the holy, spiritual, heavenly sacrifices, and the living covenant, whereof Christ is the mediator, and the law written in the heart, and the spirit of the Lord put within ; so that his presence

is as really witnessed inwardly, in that which is truly his tabernacle and temple now, as ever it was witnessed outwardly, in his outward tabernacle and temple under the law. Oh! that Christians might not have the name only, but might be in the life and in the power, wherein these things are felt and experienced; for indeed the wonders of the Lord are seen in his temple, and his name is praised there, Selah. There he breaks the shield and the bow, the spear and the battle, Selah. There the enemy is overcome; the holy victory that bringeth him under, issueth out thence, Selah. There the well is opened, and the Philistine nature hath power to stop it no more, Selah. There the treasury of life and wisdom, and the riches of God's goodness are made manifest for ever.

Truly, friends, I have not lost any thing that ever I had, or acknowledged of God in the days of my former profession, by believing in the light which God hath now revealed in me, but have it still with me, and in greater clearness and plainness, and fuller demonstration than I then had it; but that of the flesh which mixed with it, and hindered it from being rightly serviceable to the Lord, and fully comfortable to me, that the Lord hath been removing by his searching light, and by the demonstration of his spirit and power. And if, at length, after all my deep and long misery, the Lord hath given me to meet with and enjoy that which is truly excellent (among those whom men despise) I could heartily wish for you, that ye also might meet with and enjoy the same, without passing through that misery and bitter anguish, and distress of spirit, through which the Lord led me thereto. The Lord preserve his people, by the arm of his mighty power, which he hath stretched out for them, and whereby he hath gathered them to himself. And those which are not yet of this fold, oh! that it would

would please him to seek them out, and bring them home also; that the Lord may be one, and his name one amongst us, and that that which divideth and scattereth from the living truth, might be scattered and brought to nought every where, in all who would be one, and desire to serve God, with one consent, in that which is true and pure. Amen.

SOME

S O M E
D I R E C T I O N S
T O T H E
P A N T I N G S O U L,

Which hath been long travelling in the Letter, but hath not yet been acquainted with the Power, nor hardly so much as entered into the Ministration of endless Life (which is the Ministration of the GOSPEL), that it may feel the Spring, and come to drink there of the living Waters.

MATT. xi. 28, 29, 30.

“ Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

SOME sweet meditations sprang in my heart concerning this portion of scripture; with breathings of spirit for, and rollings of bowels towards, those “ that labour, and are heavy laden,” which I find drawings to communicate.

1. In

SOME DIRECTIONS, &c. 15

1. In the gospel (which is the power of God unto salvation) is the soul's rest. It is the doctrine of the kingdom, wherein is life, joy, peace, and everlasting rest to the soul in God. The law had the shadow of the good things to come; but under it was not the possession of the good things themselves, but only a labouring after them, and a mourning and load because of the want of them: but in the gospel is the substance, the enjoyment; life and immortality are there brought to light, and an entrance ministered into the everlasting kingdom, where they are felt, possessed, and enjoyed. “ The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” saith the Forerunner: it is come, saith the Messiah: and in it there is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the pure spirit of life.

2. It is the will of the King of Saints, that his people should enjoy the rest and peace of his gospel. He would not have them always labouring and heavy laden, as under the law; but he would have their souls feel and enjoy the ease, the liberty, the sweetness, the pure power and eternal rest of his life. The spirit of the Lord was upon him to preach glad tidings to the meek, liberty to the captives, life to the dead, the opening of the prison to the prisoner of hope, the binding up of the broken-hearted, the pouring in of oil upon the wounded: and he would have the souls of his people enjoy that which he came to bring them.

3. Christ hath plainly chalked out the path of his rest to every weary panting soul, which he that walketh in cannot miss of. He hath cast up, cast up; he hath made the way plain in the gospel, so plain, that the way-faring man, though a fool, yet keeping to the light of the gospel, cannot err therein, or miss of the blessed rest thereof. How is it? Why “ come unto me; take my yoke upon you,

you, and learn of me." He that walketh in this path cannot miss of it: the rest is at the end of it, nay, the rest is in it: "he that believeth entereth into the rest." The true faith, the faith which stands in the power, and which is given to the birth which is born from above, is the substance of the rest hoped for, and there is a true taste and some enjoyment of it given to him that truly believeth.

4. The rest was once felt and enjoyed, when the gospel was known in power. Believers, in the first day of the gospel, before the night overtook that glorious dispensation, found "peace and joy in believing;" yea, they could rejoice in the Lord always. They felt the power and the life, which stood over all the powers of darkness, and brought good to them out of every affliction, and out of every temptation, and out of every distress: so that standing in the life, and in the power which had quickened them, and was present with them, they could "count it all joy when they fell into manifold temptations," knowing the advantage which would accrue to them thereby, and possessing their souls in the pure patience, till God wrought it out for them. They had an entrance ministered to them into the everlasting kingdom: they received the kingdom which could not be shaken, and in it had fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, and in the eternal light the blood ran in their vessels, which cleansed them, and kept them pure; and they sat down with Christ in the heavenly places, even every one in the particular mansion which God had built in them by his spirit. The fear of the living God was put in their hearts; the spirit of the Lord was within them, and there his law was written, and read in the spirit, and the treasures of his kingdom were opened by the key of David in the

the hand of the spirit; and their souls had true satisfaction and rest in measure, and were travelling on towards the fulness.

5. There is no rest to the soul to be enjoyed in the gospel from under the yoke. This stands eternally: that which yokes down that which would be at ease and liberty out of the life, that is the soul's true rest; there is no other: and under the yoke it is enjoyed, and not otherwise; only when that which is to be yoked down is consumed and destroyed, it is then no longer a yoke, but perfect liberty. But the same thing which is the liberty is the yoke: and under the yoke, the sweetness, the ease, the lightfomeness, the safe possession of the life is enjoyed. Mark this therefore diligently: the yoke is not one thing, and the liberty another; but one and the same. The power of God, the life everlasting, the pure light, the divine nature, is a yoke to the transgressing nature; but it is the ease, the pleasure, the rest, the peace, the joy, the natural center of that which is born of God.

Now to the soul that hath felt breathings towards the Lord formerly, and in whom there are yet any true breathings left after his living presence, and after the feeling of his eternal virtue in the heart, I have this to say: Where art thou? Art thou in thy soul's rest? Dost thou feel the virtue and power of the gospel? Dost thou feel the ease which comes from the living arm, to the heart which is joined to it in the light of the gospel? Is thy labouring for life in a good degree at an end? And dost thou feel the life and power flowing in upon thee from the free fountain? Is the load really taken off from thy back? Dost thou find the captive redeemed and set free from the power of sin, and the captivity broken, and he which led thee captive from the life and from

the eternal power, now led captive by the life, and by the redeeming power, which is eternal? Hast thou found this, or hast thou missed of it? Let thine heart answer. Ah! do not imagine and talk away the rest and salvation of thy soul. The gospel-state is a state of substance, a state of enjoying the life, a state of feeling the presence and power of the Lord in his pure Holy Spirit, a state of binding up, a state of healing, a state of knowing the Lord, and walking with him in the light of his own spirit. It begins in a sweet powerful touch of life, and there is a growth in the life (in the power, in the divine virtue, in the rest, peace, and satisfaction of the soul in God) to be administered and waited for daily. Now art thou here, in the living power, in the divine life, joined to the spring of life, drawing water of life out of the well of life with joy? Or art thou dry, dead, barren, sapless, or at best but unsatisfiedly mourning after what thou wantest?

Well, ye that are dry, dead, barren, as it were without the living God (that know not the shining of his sun, nor the descending of his dews from on high on his tender plants, nor the care, diligence, and circumspection of the husbandman over his husbandry), oh! wait for the quickening virtue, for the visitations of the day-spring from on high! that ye may be quickened again to God, that ye may find his life visiting you, his spirit breathing upon you, that the seed of Jacob may be raised in you to travel out of this barren state, even out of this land of darkness, and from under the shadow of death, to the land where life lives and flourishes, and daily distributeth plentiful nourishment and refreshment to all its offspring, who are taught to wait for it, and to feed on it in the holy place, out of the sight of the eye of the fleshly wisdom.

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And ye who are still gasping after the living God, on whom the breathings of life still abide; who remain unsatisfied inwardly for want of the presence of the Lord, and whose hearts still mourn and lament deeply after him, oh! consider what is the matter, that ye have mourned so long, and sought so long, and yet to this day are at a distance from the thing ye have mourned for and sought after!

“ Strait is the gate, narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” The way of unbelief is broad, yea, the way of belief is broad also. It is easy for a man so to believe concerning Christ, or in Christ (as his heart may call it) as to miss of the nature of the true faith, and of the sweet and blessed effects which accompany it. It is easy likewise to miss the yoke (to take up a wrong yoke, in the self-will, self-wisdom, self-interpretation of scriptures), or easy starting aside from the true yoke; but it is hard coming under the yoke of the life, and hard abiding under it. Again, it is easy mis-learning: a man may so read, and so hear, as that he may be always learning, and never come to the knowledge of the truth; never come to the truth as it is received and held in Jesus; but may so get and hold the knowledge of the truth, as man in his wisdom may get and hold it from the letter. And if a man thus miss the way, how can he attain the end? If a man begin not in the true faith, in the living faith, how can he attain the rest which the true faith alone leads to? If a man miss of the yoke, or abide not constantly under the yoke, how can he meet with the true ease and rest which is in it, and which it alone can administer? If a man learn not the truth aright of the true teacher, how can he ever reap the effects of the true knowledge? Ah! poor hearts! it is not enough to have breathings after God, nor to be very

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diligent.

diligent and industrious, either in outward ordinances, or inward exercises of spirit; but the way of the gospel must be cast up by God, and the soul led into it by him, and daily preserved by him, and must walk in the path which is proper for it to walk in, or it may mourn and cry all its days, and never meet with that enjoyment of God, and satisfaction in God, which it waits for, and cries after. It is one thing to mourn after a gospel-state, but another thing to be brought into it by the power. With my heart I own those that mourn after and feel the want of God, where-ever they are; but this I know certainly, that they can never come to the enjoyment of him, but in that living path which the scriptures testify of to be in him who is the life, and which his spirit is now found manifestly leading into. Blessed be his name.

QUEST. But how may my poor soul, who have long mourned, and groaned, and been sick of love after my beloved, but could never attain to the satisfactory enjoyment of him, come to walk in his path, that so I may meet with, and lie down in, the power of life and salvation which the gospel holds forth to the true believer, and which I have been long sensible of the deep want of?

ANSW. Thou that wouldst enjoy thy beloved, and feel the rest of his gospel, and walk in that path which leads thereto, wait to learn of the spirit these things following:

1. Know what it is that is to walk in the path of life, and indeed is alone capable of walking therein. It is that which groans, and which mourns; that which is begotten of God in thee. The path of life is for the seed of life. The true knowledge of the way, with the walking in the way, is reserved for God's child, for God's traveller. Therefore keep in the regeneration, keep in the birth;

birth; be no more than God hath made thee. Give over thine own willing; give over thine own running; give over thine own desiring to know or to be any thing, and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee, and be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou shalt find, by sweet experience, that the Lord knows that, and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is its portion. And as thou takest up the cross to thyself, and sufferest that to overspread and become a yoke over thee, thou shalt become renewed, and enjoy life, and the everlasting inheritance in that.

2. Know in what light it is to walk, which is in the light of the spirit. There the child is begotten (not in Satan's darkness, or highest transformings into the likeness of light, which is but darkness; nor in the light of man's wisdom, searching knowledge or comprehension) and there it walks: in that light it fetcheth every step and motion towards the land of life; therefore hold no knowledge out of the spirit. If any knowledge concerning the things of God be held out of the freshness of the spirit, it presently proves dead and unprofitable. The spiritual Israel cannot travel without a spirit of light; which light is eternal and incomprehensible, and cannot be held by man's spirit, but shineth fresh in the renewed spirit every day, and so is daily gathering it more and more inward into itself, comprehending it in itself, and preserving it in its own purity, clearness, and brightness. Oh! this is it hath undone many, even catching at light from the spirit, transplanting the image of the divine things into the earthly principle, and there holding of them in the earthly part, growing wise by them there, and making use of them from thence as man sees good, and not seeing a necessity of depending on the

the spirit for fresh light and life every day to every spiritual motion. Thus the traveller soon comes to lose the true path, and instead thereof travels on in a road of his own wisdom's forming: and so though he seems to himself to make a large progress, yet makes no true progress at all, but is exceedingly run out aside in a by-way; all which ground he must traverse back again, ere he can come to the truth of his former state, or proceed in the true travel.

3. Know and keep to the power, which alone began any true work in the heart, which alone also can preserve it, and which alone can carry it on. Christ was made a priest, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life: and every sacrificer under him (which every true believer is) is so made by the same power. The powers of darkness are continually at hand, which nothing can stand its ground against (much less walk on safely) without being in that power which is above them. The first coming to Christ must be in the power of the Father's drawing: and no believing afterwards is of the true nature, nor will avail the soul in its progress and travels towards life, but what abides in, and goeth forth in, the same power. So the taking up the yoke, and drawing in it, must be by the power of the new life; and so must the disciple's learning be. As the master teacheth in the power of the spirit the things which alone can be seen with the new eye, heard with the new ear, and received into the new heart; so the scholar must learn and receive his lessons of life in the same power. Let any disciple of Christ be from under the shadow of the power, believe out of the power, walk out of the power, act out of the power, he is from that wherein his life stands, and wherein alone is his preservation; and ah! how liable is he then
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to falls, bruises, snares, and temptations of the enemy.

4. Watch against the selfish wisdom, in every step of thy growth, and in every spiritual motion, that that come not between thee and thy life; that that deceive thee not with a likeness, a shadow, making it appear more pleasing to the eye than the substance. Every step of thy way it will be laying baits for thee; and it is easy for deceit to enter thee at any time, and for that wisdom to get up in thee under an appearance of spiritual wisdom, unless the Lord tenderly and powerfully preserve thee: and if it prevail, it will lead thee from the path of the true wisdom; it will cozen thee with a false faith, instead of the true faith; with false praying, instead of the breathings of the true child; with diligence and zeal in thy false way, instead of the true zeal and diligence; yea, it will hurry thee on in the path of error, shutting that eye in thee which should see, and hardening thine heart against thy bosom-friend. And being thus deceived, thou mayest be as zealous in thy age and generation against the truth, as the Jews were in theirs: and as certainly as they put Christ to death, and persecuted his apostles, though they cried up the former prophets, so certainly thou (under this deceit) canst not but act against the present dispensation and appearance of Christ's spirit, and wouldst persecute either the prophets, apostles, or Christ himself, were it their present day now so to appear as formerly they did.

5. Let nothing judge in thee (concerning thine own heart, or concerning others, or concerning any way or truth of God) but only the begotten of God in the heart. Let the light in which thou art begotten to God, and which shines upon his begotten, be the only judge in thee, and then thou canst not err in judgment. Be not hasty, be not forward in judgment; keep back to the life, still waiting for
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the appearance and openings of the life. A few steps fetched in the life and power of God are much safer and sweeter than an hasty progress in the hasty forward spirit.

Indeed this is the true religion, to feel God beginning the work, and to wait on him for his carrying it on. The feeling of God's spirit beginning somewhat in the heart, the heart's waiting on him for more of his spirit, and walking on with him in his spirit, as he pleaseth to quicken, lead, draw, and strengthen; this is the spiritual and true religion: and there is no duty or ordinance of the gospel out of the spirit; but it is easy crying up and observing the likeness of any of them out of the spirit, into which observance a strange spirit easily enters; and then that which was of God in the heart soon withers, and a contrary building is raised, and the state of the heart changed. Oh! wait on the Lord, that he may give you to understand these things; for the apostasy from God is very deep, and more provoking among the Protestants than among the Papists; yea, most of all provoking where it is most inward and spiritual.

QUEST. But how may I know and keep to the begotten of God, and to the light and power of the Lord, and keep down the fleshly wisdom and comprehension concerning the things of God?

ANSW. When God begets life in the heart, there is a favour of it in thy vessel, and a secret living warmth and virtue, which the heart in some measure feels, whereby it is known. Lie low in the fear of the Most High, that this leaven may grow and increase in thee. This is the leaven of the kingdom; this is it which must change thy heart and nature, and make thy vessel (which perhaps hath been long and much corrupted) fit to receive the treasure of the kingdom. Now while the favour is upon thee, while the virtue of the life is fresh in thee, thou

findest

findest some strength towards God, with some little taste and discerning of the things of his kingdom. Know thy weakness, and go not beyond thy measure; but in what thou hast received bow before the fulness, worship God in that, and be patient in what he exercises thee withal, waiting for more from him. And when the night comes upon thee, and thou perhaps art at a loss, missing the favour and presence of the life, and not knowing how to come by it again, be patient and still, and thou wilt find breathings after a fresh visitation, and a meek humble, broken spirit before the Lord. Thou wilt see thou canst do nothing to recover his presence again; nay, thou canst not so much as wait for him, or breathe after him, without his help; but he is nigh to the poor, nigh to the broken, nigh to the distressed, nigh to the helpless. Oh! do not with thy fleshly cries and roarings think to awaken thy beloved before his season; but in the night of distress, feel after somewhat which may quiet and stay thy heart till the next springing of the day. The sun will arise, which will scatter the clouds; and he is near thee who will give thee to hope that thou shalt yet see God, and find again the quickenings and leadings of his spirit. And in the day of his power thou wilt find strength to walk with him; yea, in the day of thy weakness his grace will be sufficient for thee; and he will nurture thee up in his life by his pure spirit, causing thee to grow under his shadow; and he will be teaching thee to live, and to speak, and to move and act from the principle, and within the compass of his light and life eternal. Only be not wise to catch the notions of things into the earthly part, where the moth can corrupt, and where the thief can break through and steal; but know the divine treasury, where all the things of life are treasured up by the spirit, and handed forth to the living child with fresh life, according to its

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need of them. And thus thy heart being kept close to God, and thy spiritual senses continually exercised about the things of God, it will be easy to thee to know the shepherd's voice, and to distinguish the sound of the spirit in thine own heart: and that which tries spirits and motions in thine own heart, will also give thee the discerning of truth and error abroad, even of the spirit of God, and the spirit of Satan in others; so that thou wilt be able to try not only words, but spirits, becoming acquainted with the anointing, which favours all things, and will give thee to judge, not by the words, but by the power: for thou thyself being in the power, in the anointing, in the favour, it will become natural to thee to feel, to taste, to know, and unite with what is one with thy life, what comes from the same spirit in others, and to turn from the contrary. And thus thy life, thy growth, thy path will be sweet, safe, clear, certain, demonstrative in the spirit, and past all reasonings of flesh and blood, either in thyself or others. The beginning of life eternal is in an higher principle than man can come at. Man's wisdom and knowledge of the things of God is but brutish before it. As thou comest into that principle, abidest and growest in that principle, thou art beyond man's judgment, and art able to judge man, and fathom his whole course as with a span; but are quite out of his reach in the lowest of thy motions, thoughts, or actions; I mean such as flow from, and are comprehended in, the life.

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CONCERNING

The WORSHIP of the LIVING GOD,

Which he teacheth ISRAEL, his People,

Who know him to be the Only True God,
and the Worship which he teacheth them,
to be the Only True Spiritual WORSHIP.

BECAUSE the worship of God is a weighty thing, and there have been (and still are) so many errors about it, and the errors therein are of such dangerous consequence, both in relation to men's eternal state hereafter, and to their right constitution, peace, and welfare in this world; and because I have had deep experience concerning the worship of God from a child, having travelled in spirit with my God for the right knowledge thereof, and in singleness of heart given up unto him, according as he hath taught and led my poor, needy, depending soul; I say, therefore is it on my heart, to answer some few questions concerning the worship of God, for the service of such as both desire and need instruction therein.

QUEST. I. Who is the worshipper, the acceptable worshipper in the sight of God? Or whom hath God chosen out, to hold forth his worship in the sight of the world, since he rejected the Jews with their worship?

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That God hath appointed a chosen people to worship him, that I presuppose; though, if need were, the proof thereof might be ready at hand. It is not every man that would thrust himself upon the Lord, whom the Lord will accept; but "the Father seeketh such to worship him," John iv. 23. There is a capacity to be found in man, to make him a worshipper; even such a capacity, as may enable him to perform that worship which God requireth of him. Now this is the thing to be enquired into; What this capacity is, and who are the persons that are found in this capacity?

ANSW. The worshipper in the times of the gospel, the worshipper under the New Testament, "is he that is born of God." He that is drawn out of the dark spirit of this world, and formed anew in the light of God's spirit. He that is a Jew inward, he that hath the uncircumcision of his heart cut off by the power of God; this is the worshipper, whom "the Father seeks to worship him." This is the sort of worshippers God chose, when he cast off the Jews. God did not chuse any one nation, or many nations, instead of that one which he cast off; but he sent his apostles and ministers among all nations, to gather a spiritual seed, instead of the natural. And these alone are capable of setting up, and holding forth, his spiritual worship unto the world, and to provoke them to wait for, and press towards the capacity of coming into the same spiritual worship with them.

QUEST. 2. Which is the place of worship?

ANSW. The only place of worship in the New Testament, is where the spiritual worshippers meet together. The place is spiritual. As the worship is spiritual, so is the place where it is to be offered. It hath a spiritual consideration; not outward, as under the law. It is to be offered in the spirit; that is the place. Where doth my soul offer its private worship

worship to God? Hath it relation to any outward place? Or is it in the building which God hath reared up in my heart by his spirit? Which building stands in, and is comprehended in, his spirit. And I can offer his publick worship in no other place, but in a building of the same nature, in an house built of more of the same stones. This then is the way of worshipping in the true light; divers living stones meeting together, every one retiring in spirit into the living name, into the power which begat them, they all meet in one and the same place, in one and the same power, in one and the same fountain of life; and here they bow down to the Father of life, offering up living sacrifices to him, and receiving the bread and water of life from him, and feeding in the rich pastures of his infinite fulness. In the holy city, in the living temple which is built by God, of the stone which all other builders refuse, is the place of worship of the living God, where the true Jews meet to offer up their spirits, souls, and bodies, a living sacrifice to the Father of life; and where they meet with such a glorious presence and power of the Father, as none but the true Jews were ever acquainted with.

QUEST. 3. What is the worship, or what are the sacrifices, which the true worshippers offer up to God in this holy place?

ANSW. The gifts of his spirit. These they offer up, and nothing else. The breathings which the Father gives into the heart of the child, they are breathed back unto him in the same spirit of life; in the living sense, in the quickening power. Nothing of man's wisdom, nothing of man's invention, nothing according to man's will, nothing that would please the flesh, or seem glorious in its eye, is offered up here; but the exhortations, or directions, or reproofs that spring up in God's light, in God's wisdom, they are given forth in the leadings, and by

by the guidance of his spirit, and they reach to the hearts of those, to whom he pleaseth to direct them. And this is the ground of such meltings, and breakings, and convictions of soul (and such-like inward operations) as are frequently found in such assemblies. For the living God is there, and the dread of his power overspreads the hearts of such, as are gathered into and assembled in his name; and the life springs in the earthen vessels, and the savour is precious to all that have their spiritual senses.

QUEST. 4. What is the season of offering up these gifts?

ANSW. The seasons of the true worship stand in the will of God. They are gifts, and the time of them stands in the will of the giver. Prayer is a gift. A man cannot pray when he will; but he is to watch and to wait, when the Father will kindle in him living breathings towards himself. So the word of God (whether of exhortation or instruction) is a gift, which is to be waited for, and then to be given forth in the life and strength of that spirit which causeth it to spring. Indeed it is an hard matter either to speak the word of the Lord, or to hear the word of the Lord. A man may easily speak what he invents, and another may easily hear and judge of such words; but to speak the word of life, requires the tongue of the learned in the language of God's spirit; and to hear the word of life, requires a quickened ear: and to know the times and seasons of the spirit, requires both being begotten of the spirit, and being acquainted with it.

QUEST. 5. Was this the worship of the former Christians in the apostles days?

ANSW. Search the scriptures. Were not they come to the New Jerusalem? And where did they offer their sacrifices? Did they offer them in the Old Jerusalem, or at Samaria, or the mountain where the fathers worshipped? Or did they not rather

rather offer them at the Mount Sion, to which they were come; where the male of the flock (even the Lamb without spot) is known, and the blood of sprinkling felt? Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. and 1 Pet. ii. 5. Oh! read! read in the life of God! the nature of the things themselves; and do not feed upon your own imaginations, or the imaginations of any other men concerning them. Sweet is our God; his living presence is exceedingly nourishing to the soul; precious is his power felt in the heart; it is no less than life eternal to worship him in his spirit. Oh! let not the enemy of the soul cheat your souls any longer of the precious things of his kingdom, with husky and dry food instead thereof, which only gratifieth the earthly part, but nourisheth not the immortal life.

QUEST. 6. How came the worship of God to be transformed and changed so from the living power, into such dead formal ways, as generally worshippers in the world are found in?

ANSW. The enemy hath done this, by God's permission. The Lord was pleased to suffer him thus far to prevail against the truth; even to get into the form of it, and there to beget men into the form, and then deny and turn against the power. And this is the way of antichrist in kingdoms and nations, even to set up a formal way of worship, and by it to fight against the true power.

QUEST. 7. How long hath this been done, and how long is it yet to last?

ANSW. From antichrist's beginning, all the time of his reign, until his overthrow. The formal way of religion will never be overturned, nor the power of religion find place in the earth, but there will be still countenancing of formal ways of worship, and turning head against the power and life of the spirit, until antichrist's time come to an end, and the

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the Lord consume him by the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him by the brightness of his coming.

QUEST. 8. When shall this be?

ANSW. The Lord is about this work. He hath already raised up that, which hath not been raised up for many generations; and the Lord hath sorely smote down the spirit of antichrist in many hearts already; and he is fetching a great and universal blow at him; at which stroke, when it cometh from the throne of God, the nations shall tremble before him; and it will be as honourable to wait for the movings of his spirit, and to worship him alone therein, as it is now reproachful.

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THE
EVERLASTING GOSPEL

OF

Our Lord JESUS CHRIST,

AND THE

BLESSED EFFECTS thereof, testified to
from Experience.

By ISAAC PENINGTON.

“ The darkness is past, and the true light now
“ shineth.” 1 JOHN ii. 8.

“ Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the
“ glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: for
“ behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
“ and gross darkness the people; but the Lord
“ shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be
“ seen upon thee.” ISAI. lx. 2.

“ When the Lord shall build up Sion, he shall
“ appear in his glory.” PSAL. cii. 16. (indeed
he doth so).

THE
EVERLASTING GOSPEL
OF
Our Lord JESUS CHRIST,
AND THE
BLESSED EFFECTS thereof, testified to
from Experience.

THE blessed message which the apostles (who were sent by Christ to preach the gospel) heard of Christ, and were to declare to others, was, "That God is light, and in him is no darkness at all," 1 John i. 5.

The end of Christ's sending them with this message was, that thereby, preaching it in the evidence and demonstration of God's Spirit, they might "open men's eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in him," Acts xxvi. 18.

Now the eye of the mind being opened, and the mind turned from the darkness within to the light within, and from Satan's power to the power of

God, which is revealed in the light, the soul in the light comes to see (over the darkness, and Satan who darkened it) the things of God and his kingdom, as they are revealed in the light, which makes them manifest.

As, First, It sees him, who is the rock, the holy foundation of God, the holy foundation of life in the soul; the living stone, by which all the other living stones are made alive, and they are taught of God to come to him as to a living stone, and so are built upon him, and become God's building and new creation in him, 1 Pet. ii. 5. 2 Cor. v. 17. And here, in this light, none can miss of the true coming, hearing the voice of the Father, and being drawn and taught by him to come to the Son, John vi. 44, 45.

Secondly, Here the true Jew's state, the state of the inward Jew, and the inward circumcision, and the true worship (even the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth) is known. For the Jew inward is a child of light, begotten in the light, redeemed out of darkness, and dwells and walks in the light, as God is in the light, 1 John i. 7. And the circumcision is not a fleshly act; but the cutting off that which is fleshly from the mind by the spirit and power of Christ. And the gospel-worship, or the worship of the Jew inward, is the worshipping of God in the newness of the life of his Son.

Thirdly, Here is the true repentance from the dead nature and dead works, which no man can attain to of himself; but is God's gift through his Son, whom God hath appointed to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, Acts v. 31. I say here, that repentance is known, waited for, and received. For not to men in the darkness, and loving the darkness, is the true repentance given; but to them that are turned to the

the light, to them is repentance given unto life, Acts xi. 18 compared with chap. xxvi. 17, 18.

Fourthly, Here the true faith, the precious gift of faith is received, whereby men believe in him who gives life, and receive life from him. And this is the faith which gives access to God, and gives victory over the world, and that which is contrary to God: the faith which is given in the light doth so; but the faith which men have in the darkness doth not so.

Fifthly, Here the cross of Christ is known, which is an inward, living, spiritual thing, effectually crucifying that man that takes it up, and daily bears it, to all that is earthly and sinful; and then the pure seed and life of Christ springs up in his earth, over the world, and every worldly thing, Gal. vi. 14.

Sixthly, Here the pure love springs in the heart, both to him that begets, and to him that is begotten. In the light there is nothing but love; but in the darkness there is no true love to be found; but the very love that is found there, is of the nature of enmity. It is the light of truth that purifieth the heart to the love unfeigned, 1 Pet. i. 22. Deut. xxx. 6.

Seventhly, Here the Lamb's patience and meekness is experienced, and the soul adorned with it. The Lamb is the light of the world, and they that are made lambs by him partake of his sweet and meek nature, learning of him to be meek and lowly in heart, and so have that patience and meekness from him, which no other can attain to, Matt. xi. 29.

Eighthly, In the light the precious promises are fulfilled and partaken of; which make them who partake of them, and in whom they are fulfilled, partakers of the divine nature: for the divine nature is not partaken of in the darkness, but in him who

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is light. Man (who is darkness) cannot partake of the promises which belong to the children of light; but when, by the operation of God's power, his state and nature is changed, and he is now no more darkness, but light in the Lord, then the promises which were made to the children of light he cometh to have a share in, Eph. v. 8. 2 Pet. i. 4.

Lastly, In the light the holy anointing is received, the voice of Christ heard, and the new everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David, made with the soul, Isa. lv. iii. The law of the new covenant (even the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus) written in the mind, and the holy fear of the new covenant, which cleanseth and keepeth clean, put in the heart, and the blessed spirit of the Father given and received, which gives to those that receive it power to become the sons of God, causing them to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and judgments, and to do them. Oh! blessed dispensation of life and holy power, which the Lord hath caused to break forth among a despised people in these latter days! Oh! that the sons of men would hear and understand this precious loving-kindness of the Lord, and put their trust under the shadow of his wings, and know what it is to be satisfied with the fatness of his spiritual gospel-house, and to drink of the river of his pleasures, and in his light to see light, Psal. xxxvi. 7, 8, 9.

This opened in me this morning, in love and compassion towards the Papists. My bowels have often rolled over them, and been pained concerning them, to see how they are closed and shut up as to the true sense and understanding of things of this nature. Oh! that they would prize the day of their visitation, that they might hear the sound of life both from others, and also in their own hearts, and the

the saving arm of the Lord might be inwardly revealed to them, and they effectually redeemed thereby!

I am no disdainer of Papists, or any sort of Protestants, nay, not of Turks or Jews; but a mourner because of their several mistakes, and a breather to the God of my life for tender mercy towards them all.

P O S T S C R I P T.

AND in this light the true church, the gospel church, the New Testament church is known; which is a church of the children of light, a building built in the light, which church is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thess. i. 1. In whom they are built together for the habitation of God, through the spirit, Ephes. ii. 22. Yea, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord, ver. 21. (for the Lord frameth them fitly together into a spiritual and holy building). And all that are here gathered out of the darkness into the light, who walk in the light, and abide in the light, are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, ver. 20. And are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, ver. 19.

The gospel church is the spiritual house of Jacob, which walk in the light of the Lord, Isa. ii. 5. who go up to the mountain of the Lord (to that which is revealed to be the mountain of God in the last days, even spiritual Mount Sion, Heb. xii. 22.), to the house of the God of Jacob, where he teacheth his

his spiritual people, the inward Jews, of his ways, and they learn to walk in his paths: for out of this Sion shall go forth the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus (in the days of the gospel) and the word of the Lord from this Jerusalem, ver. 2, 3. For Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of all the children which are born of God's spirit, Gal. iv. 26. John iii. 6. And she being the mother of them all, nourisheth them all with the word of life, which goeth forth from her; and all her children know and justify her their mother, Matt. xi. 19. Oh! that all, both Papists and Protestants, knew this true mother-church, this mother of all the living, of whom none but the living are born, and who nourisheth all the living, and none else, with the law and word of eternal life!

And if they knew the true church, the church which is of the true Jews, the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and did live and walk in the light of the Lamb, and follow the leader, the Shepherd of Israel, and faithful bishop of the soul, who overseeth and taketh care of the soul, they would learn, and come to know and experience these things following:

First, The dwelling-places of Mount Sion, and her assemblies, and God's creating upon every of them a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, which is the defence upon all the glory that the Lord bringeth forth among his spiritual church and people, Isai. iv. 5.

Secondly, They would know the land of the inward Jews, and spiritual Judah, and the song sung therein, because of the strong city which the Lord builds there, and the salvation which he appoints for walls and bulwarks about it; and would see and know how none but the inward Jews, the inwardly circumcised and sanctified, even the righteous nation that keepeth the truth, can enter by the gates

gates into that city, Isai. xxvi. 1, 2. And they that dwell in that city, whose minds are stayed on the Lord, and who trust in him, the Lord will keep in perfect peace, ver. 3. Then Jerusalem is a quiet habitation indeed, and the resting and feeding-places in it are sure, Isai. xxxii. 18. and chap. xxxiii. 15, 20.

Thirdly, They would know the feast of fat things, which the Lord of hosts makes to all people that are here; to all people that come up to, and dwell on, his holy mountain, and serve and worship him in spirit and truth. The Lord of hosts maketh such a feast as no eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive what it is, but only by the spirit of God; even a feast of fat things, even a feast of spiritual fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined, Isai. xxv. 6. They that are turned to the light, and follow Christ the light, shall not abide in darkness, but have the light of life, John viii. 12. Shall be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the dear Son, and they shall sup with Christ, and he with them, and both together drink of the fruit of the vine of life, new in the Father's kingdom.

Fourthly, They shall infallibly know here, in this light which shines on God's holy mountain, the destroying or swallowing up of the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations, Isai. xxv. 7. For the veil is cast over and spread in the darkness; but is done away and swallowed up in Christ the light: for the veil is done away in him, 2 Cor. iii. 14. And all that are in Christ, in his spirit, in the light and liberty thereof, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the spirit of the Lord, ver. 17, 18.

G

Lastly,

P O S T S C R I P T.

Lastly, Here the king of righteousness's highway is known, even the way of holiness, which the unclean cannot pass over; but the sanctified in the light do walk in; and the wayfaring men here, though fools, do not err in, Isai. xxxv. 8. For they that are taught of God in the new covenant, and follow the leading of his blessed spirit, do not err.

Oh! that the true church were known, which is now come and coming out of the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved, who led and leads out thence, into her own land of life and glory, where her light shines, and she ariseth and standeth upon her feet before the Lord, and the glory of the Lord shines upon her, and covers her! Happy is the eye that seeth this, and the soul that hath a share in it!

A F E W

A F E W

E X P E R I E N C E S

CONCERNING SOME OF THE

W E I G H T Y T H I N G S

R E L A T I N G T O

G O D's

E V E R L A S T I N G K I N G D O M.

Given forth in true and tender Love, for the Help
of any such of the Race of the true Travellers
as may stand in need thereof.

B Y

I S A A C P E N I N G T O N.

T H E

P R E F A C E.

IT hath pleased the Lord to unseal and open the fountain of life in the midst of his heritage, so that in his light do they see light, and in his life do they reap and enjoy life. And the precious promises are fulfilled in the midst of them, of sending the Comforter, and pouring out of the Holy Spirit, so that he that believeth, "out of his belly do flow rivers of living water." Yea, the Lord hath a vineyard, which he keepeth night and day (lest any hurt it), and watereth every moment. Oh! the streams of life, the streams of love, the streams of grace, the streams of mercy, the streams of peace, the streams of joy and consolation, which flow from him into the bosoms of his children! Indeed grace, and mercy, and peace are multiplied from God our Father, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ daily, insomuch as that saying of Christ to his disciples (John xiv. 26, 27.) is now fulfilled, "I say not that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you," &c. The Father, in his love, hath brought us to the Son; and the Son, in the same love, hath brought us back to the Father; and now the love flows from the Father in and through the Son, most naturally and abundantly. And where the heart is circumcised, and much forgiven, there love returns back most truly and abundantly; so that the Lord our God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, is loved with all the heart, and with all

all the soul, and nothing is thought too good to sacrifice to him, nor nothing too much to suffer for him. Oh! the pure love that springs and flows between the heavenly Father and the spiritual child! The best love that is to be found in this world (in the men of the world) is not worthy to be a shadow of it. God is love, and his children are of him, and partake of, and dwell in, the same love; though the enmity, and highest wisdom of this world, know them not; as it never could know the children of the true wisdom.

Now from this fountain do not only issue springs and streams of life to refresh our own hearts; but testimonies concerning the life which we feel and partake of, and concerning our travels from the dark land through the valley of tears (where he that gave us life was our well) towards our resting-place.

These also spring up in us for the sakes of others; of which nature are the things which follow, in this little treatise. For not for my own sake only did they spring up in me, but to signify to others of the mercy the Lord hath shewn me, and the way wherein he hath led me, and what he hath given me to taste of and experience in the way; which will answer every true palate, every palate that is seasoned with life, and with true experience. And having received them from the Lord for this very end, to hold them forth to others, in love and in tenderness of spirit my heart is freely given up to him therein; not aiming at any thing thereby, but his glory singly, and the good of such souls to whom he shall please to extend favour and shew mercy, in opening the heavenly mystery of life and salvation.

I have often said in my heart, Who hath begotten me there? Who would have said that Sarah should have given children suck? My wound was deep, and seemed incurable; but blessed be the Lord, who hath

hath made known to me the physician of value, for whom no disease is too hard, but he is able to cure every sickness, and to relieve and rescue all that are captived and oppressed by the devil, that come unto him, and wait upon him, in the way of his righteous judgments and most tender mercies. For after all my religion and deep exercises, and inward experiences and knowledge, I came to such a loss of what I once had, that I sensibly felt I knew not the Lord, and lay continually groaning and mourning after him, and deeply afflicted for want of him. Oh! the pure, living, and precious life, and sweet presence of my God, that my soul wanted! inasmuch as my moisture was turned into the drought of summer, and my bones grown dry and withered! But at length the Lord, in his goodness (Oh! blessed for ever be his name!) breathed upon the dry bones, and I felt life enter from him into me, and the days of deep sorrow and distress were at length forgotten, because a heavenly birth was at length conceived and brought forth. And now where is the sackcloth? Where are the ashes? Oh! there is beauty in life, instead of the ashes in the state without life; and the garment of praise, instead of the spirit of heaviness! O glory, glory, to the binder up of the bruised and broken ones, to the Redeemer of the captives, to the repairer of the breaches, to the builder up of the wasted and desolate ones! Glory to his tender mercy, glory to his grace, glory to his love, glory to his wisdom, glory to his power, for ever and ever. Amen.

A F E W

E X P E R I E N C E S, &c.

I.

A faithful Testimony concerning the true and pure Way of Life; with Breathings for such as have Desires after it, and yet are Strangers to it.

THIS hath been the cry of my soul from my childhood, even after holiness, after the presence of the Lord, after union with him, after the nature and image of his son, after a separation from what was contrary to him, and a being brought forth in the power of his life.

Now, blessed be the Lord, that is revealed which answers the cry; which so far as my soul comes to partake of, it is refreshed and satisfied with the supply of that, which it thirsted and cried after.

And all that have felt the true cry, Oh! that they might also be taught of God, and learn aright how to wait upon him, and to walk humbly and in fear before him, that nothing might come between them and the cry of their souls; but they might be led by him into the enjoyment and possession of that, which the true birth (which is born of the Spirit, and is Spirit) naturally longs after.

Now truly there is no other way to life and satisfaction, than by believing in that power, and following that power, which raised Christ from the dead; for that is to work the work in all that are saved. To feel this power revealed within, to have the

the mind turned to this power, to follow this power in the regenerating work and path, is the way to partake of its virtue, and to experience the redemption which is thereby and therefrom.

And he that is born of the spirit, and hath his eye opened by the spirit, and daily exercised thereby; he knoweth the spirit, and is acquainted with his stirrings and movings, and taught of God to distinguish them from the evil spirit, its stirrings and movings; and so doth not quench the spirit of God, nor grieve it when it moves; nor give way to the other spirit, when it moves and allures.

Now the spirit of deceit allures and guides men not so much by outward rules, as by an inward evil nature, and by the law of sin and death. So the spirit of truth leads into truth, by the newness and power of its own life revealed in the heart, by the pure instinct of life within, and by the law of God written in the nature of a new creature, which is nearer than words without. For God blots out of the hearts of his what Satan had written there, and writes by the finger of his spirit what he would have the new birth read there; and indeed there is a kingdom of life, of righteousness, of true peace, and joy, yea, of the holy power and wisdom of the Most High, for his children (which are born of his spirit, and spring up of the immortal seed) to read.

Oh! why should mens eyes be closed, and their hearts hardened against the truth! Why should they cry up Christ in words, and cry out against his life and power where it is revealed! Is this to kiss the Son? Can such chuse (who are guilty of this) but perish in the way of their souls travels? And how many must needs perish in their resisting the power of truth, and precious testimony of God's Holy Spirit (in this our day) tending to their rescue and salvation from that which captivates and destroys?

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Christ

Christ came to destroy sin, he having received power from his Father so to do. He knoweth it to be of a destroying nature, and that it will destroy the soul, where it is not by the power of life consumed and destroyed in the soul. Oh! most precious to us is that visitation of truth, light, life, and power, which searcheth out and discovereth sin to the very root, and also destroys it! Oh! glorious is that axe of the Lord Jesus Christ which is laid to the root of the corrupt tree, and is daily hewing at and cutting it down, that it might cumber the ground no more; but that the heart might become good earth, sanctified earth, circumcised by the Lord to bring forth good fruit, good grapes, a good increase of the good seed of life to the good husbandman, who is worthy to reap, even in this world, the grace and mercy, love and goodness, wisdom and power, &c. which he plentifully soweth in the spirits of his daily. Glory to his name over all for ever, who hath exalted, exalteth, and will exalt, that which the several sorts of high professors, in their wisdom, trample upon and despise.

II.

Concerning the perfecting God's Work in the Heart.

IS it not the will of God that his people and children should be sanctified throughout, in soul, in body, in spirit?

Is is not the will of Christ that his disciples should be perfect, as their heavenly Father is perfect?

Did he not bid them pray, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is heaven?" And would he never have them believe and expect that it should be done in earth, as it is in heaven?

Doth

Doth not he who hath the true, pure, living hope (which anchors within the veil) purify himself, even as He is pure?

Is not this the way to enjoy the promises of God's holy presence (who tabernacleth in his people that are cleansed and sanctified) to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear? Will God dwell in an unholy temple? Will he dwell where sin dwells? He may indeed to such, when at any time they are tender, and truly melted before him, be to them as a wayfaring man that tarries for a night; but he will not take up his abode there, walk there, sup there, and give them to sup with him.

Hath not Christ received all power both in heaven and earth from his Father? Is not this the end of receiving his power, to bring down the soul's enemies, and to purify and sanctify his church, that it may be without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing? Is he not the captain of our salvation, anointed to fight the battles of the Lord? Where is the fight? Where is the strong man to be found, cast out, his goods spoiled, and the house emptied of him, and all that belongs to him? Is not Christ the author of faith, the finisher of faith; and doth not he carry on the work of faith with power? And what is the work of faith? Is it not to fight with, and overcome, sin; to be too hard for the enemy at all his weapons? Is there not a whole armour of light, life, and salvation prepared? What is it prepared for? Is it not that the children of light should be wholly armed with it? Were there never any wholly armed with it; or can the enemy prevail on those that are wholly armed with it? Are those that are armed with it afraid of the enemy, his power, his snares, his wiles? Or are they bold in the faith, following on, in the spiritual battles, him who rideth before them, conquering, and to conquer?

H 2

Oh!

Oh! that mens eyes were opened by the Lord! then might they see the glory of truth, in the pure light which shines from God's holy mountain; and such dark doctrines of the night (which tend to the dishonour of Christ, his power, and love, and to the upholding of the enemy's kingdom) would pass away, and prevail no more in the hearts of any that truly fear the Lord; but they would quietly wait and hope for his salvation, that by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, they might be made free from the law of sin and death, and not always be subject thereto! For all whom the Son maketh free, they are free indeed; and being made free by him, may serve God in freedom of spirit, without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of their lives. And then they know the power and virtue of the new covenant, and the defence which is thereby, where the wing of the Almighty overshadows, and his salvation (revealed therein) is experienced for a sufficient wall and bulwark against the enemy.

III.

Concerning the true Christ, how it may be certainly and infallibly known which is he.

WHILE people were in expectation, and mused in their hearts concerning John, whether he were the Christ or no, John answers the case, and tells them how they might discern and know the true Christ. It is not he that baptizeth with water, but he "that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." He "whose fan is in his hand," wherewith he cometh "thoroughly to purge his floor, gathering the wheat into his garner, and burning the chaff with fire unquenchable." Now he that knoweth

knoweth him that doth this work, and experienceth him doing this work in him, doth he not know Christ? Oh! is it not precious to be baptized by him whom God hath appointed to baptize? Oh! the fan, the precious fan, wherewith Christ (who is the power and wisdom of God) separates the precious from the vile, severs the wheat and the chaff, gathers the wheat into the precious treasury, and lets out the unquenchable fire upon the chaff! "Our God is a consuming fire," saith the apostle. To what is he a consuming fire? Is it not to the chaffy, earthy, drossy nature in men and women? Why, bring the chaff near to the fire, will it not burn up? And then (as that is burnt up and consumed) that which is pure, that which is upright, that which is tender, that which is born of God, can dwell with, and delight in, the devouring fire, and everlasting burnings. For God is not terrible to the child which is born of him, to him who is brought forth in the image and spirit of his Son; but to the transgressing nature, to the seed of evil doers, which are naturally inclined to do evil; and every day doing evil, he is terrible for evermore. Oh! blessed are they who believe in that power, and experience that power near, which raised Christ from the dead, and are baptized with his baptism! They have access to God: for so the true Jews have been inwardly cleansed and kept clean; but the unclean, who have only a notion of Christ's blood, and of his righteousness, but are not washed thereby, nor cloathed therewith, nor ever knew what it was to put off the filthy garment, and to put on the white raiment, they may pray in their own wills and spirits; but they not know what it is to draw nigh to God in the spirit and life of his Son, and so are yet to learn what it is to pray to the Father in the name of Christ. For none truly knew Christ, but they who truly know and are led by his infallible

libile spirit. "They that have not the spirit of Christ, are none of his;" and they that have his spirit, have that which is infallible. It is one thing to have words spoken concerning Christ, or formerly by Christ; another thing to have the infallible spirit itself; to be infallibly born of the spirit, and brought up in the light and life of the spirit, that he may certainly know the Shepherd's voice from the voice of every strange spirit.

IV.

Some QUERIES to such as affirm the Scriptures to be the only Rule, and deny the Spirit, the Seed of the Kingdom, the new Covenant, the holy Leaven of Life, the Law written in the Heart, to be the Rule of the Children of the new Covenant.

QUERY 1. **H**OW are the scriptures the rule; or which of the scriptures are the rule? Are the whole scriptures the rule, from the beginning of Genesis to the Revelations? Or are some parts of them the rule, some others not? If some parts of them be the rule, and some not, which parts are the rule, and which are not the rule? As to instance, in the book of Job; his friends spake many words concerning God, which were not so right as Job's, Job xlii. And also Job himself, in some of his words and speeches, darkened counsel by words without knowledge, as he himself confessed, Job xlii. 3. Now which of Job's friends words are the rule, and which not; and which of Job's words are the rule, and which not?

QUERY 2. Moses was the minister of the old covenant (for he ministered to the Jews the old covenant, which was glorious in its day); but he was not the minister of the new covenant. Now the

new

new covenant, and ministration thereof, exceeds the old in glory. The writing of the law inwardly in the tables of the heart, is a more glorious ministration than the writing of it outwardly in tables of stone. Now were Moses's words to the Jews under the old covenant intended by God to be the rule of the children of light under the new covenant? Shall the words of that ministration, which was to pass away, be the rule of the children of that ministration which is to abide for ever?

QUERY 3. Did Moses say, That when Christ came, my words which I speak or write shall be your rule, or part of your rule? Or did he not rather say, "When God raised up that prophet, him shall ye hear in all things?" Is there any one that is truly a sheep, who is not so made by him who gives life to the soul? And after he is made alive, and knows the shepherd's voice, is he not to hear his voice for ever, who gives life eternal, and who leads into the pastures of life, and to the pure still waters, all that hear his voice, and follow him? Read John xiv. 3, 4. and Acts iii. 22. and consider.

QUERY 4. Was not John as great, if not greater than Moses? Had ever any the honour, besides him, to be the immediate forerunner and preparer of the way, and to point to the Lamb of God as he did? And yet was not he to decrease in his ministry (it being not the gospel ministration of the spirit and power, as Christ's was) and Christ to increase in his gospel-ministration? Is not the least in the kingdom greater than John? And are not all that are quickened by Christ, and follow him, led by him into the kingdom? And who can give the rule of life in the kingdom, but the king thereof? In the last days doth not the Lord speak to his people by his Son? And is not he faithful in all his house, as a son, to give the law and rule of life to them in Christ?

QUERY

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QUERY

QUERY 5. Are not all that are soldiers and subjects under Christ to follow him, their Lord and Captain, whithersoever he goes or rules? How can they know whither he goes or rules, but by an inward eye and ear fixed upon, and open to him? So that when once they know his spirit (the voice of his spirit, as his true sheep do), his movings, his drawings, his leadings, his going before, is their rule to follow. And they are not to grieve or quench his spirit, in drawing back from any thing that he leads and draws them to.

QUERY 6. Is not Christ the way, the truth, the life; the living way, the living truth? Is not the living way the rule to them that live? Is not the truth itself the rule of all that are true? What should rule and guide the spiritual man, that is born of the spirit, but the wisdom of the spirit, but the oracle of God manifested in his temple and sanctuary? That which is born of the spirit, is spirit, in which the spirit is to dwell; and he in whom he dwells is to be ruled by him.

QUERY 7. What is that which the apostle calls the rule, Gal. vi. 15, 16. which if a man walk according to, peace will be upon him? Is it not the word, power, and wisdom of God? Doth not he that walketh according to that, walk in the newness of the spirit? Doth not he that walketh out of that, walk in the oldness of the letter at the best? Doth not he that believeth according to that, hopeth according to that, prayeth according to that; I say, doth not he believe, hope, and pray according to the rule? Doth not he that believeth, hopeth, prayeth otherwise (though ever so zealously and affectionately), yet, at best, can any better be said of it, but that it is but in the oldness of the letter, and so is not in the right way which God requires in the gospel-covenant?

QUERY

QUERY 8. Is not the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus the law of the new covenant? And is not that the rule to the children of the new covenant? Is not the truth which makes free, the way and rule to them who are made free by it? Is the letter, or the spirit, the rule under the ministration of the spirit? Let that which is sensible, and which feels and knows the truth and way of life (as it is in Jesus) answer. Men may search the scriptures, and yet not come to Christ for life; and men may get descriptions and a knowledge of things out of the scriptures, and yet not receive from him the rule of the new life.

V.

Concerning the Light, wherewith Christ the Life enlighteneth every Man.

“ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.
 “ And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” JOHN i. 4, 5.

WHAT is the darkness which comprehendeth not the light? Is it not man in the unregenerate state? “ Ye were darkness,” saith the apostle, speaking concerning them as they had been in that state.

Now it pleaseth the Lord, that in this darkness his pure light should shine, to gather man out of the darkness. For unless light should shine on man in his dark state, he could never be gathered out of it; but he that is turned to the light, and followeth it, cannot abide in the darkness; but cometh into that which gathereth and preserveth the mind out of it.

But of what nature is this light, which shineth in man in his dark state? It is of a living nature;
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it is light which flows from life ; it is light which hath life in it ; it is the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Word eternal, which is the light of men. And he who cometh to the true understanding, may thereby distinguish it from all other lights whatsoever.

There is a vast difference between it, and the reason and understanding of a man : for the natural man, with his understanding, is dead ; but this is living, and powerfully operating in man, as it finds entrance, and as his mind is joined to it. He that is dead, indeed, knows it not ; but he that is alive unto God, feels the virtue of it. This light is above all gathered knowledge whatsoever, and above all descriptions of things whatsoever : for it is the thing itself, even of the nature of him from whom it flows. A man may get a notion from this into his mind, which he may retain the dead knowledge of, yea, his notion may quickly be dead in them ; but he that dwells in the thing itself, knows that, and dwells in that which never dies.

VI.

A few Words further concerning Perfection.

WHAT was the intent of God in commending Job to Satan for a perfect and upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil ? Was it not to represent him as a person whom he could not make any breach upon, or prevail upon to sin ? Thou hast been ranging up and down the earth, tempting many, defiling many ; what sayest thou to my servant Job, Satan, is not he perfect ? Is not he upright to me in his heart, and all his ways ? Canst thou make any breach upon him ?

What

What saith Satan hereto ? Doth he object any sin against Job ? He is the accuser of the brethren ; and if he have wherewith to accuse, he will not fail to lay it to their charge, even before the throne of God. But what hath he to say against Job ? What can he object (either against his uprightness, or against his perfection) to the Lord ? Oh ! says he, thou hast set an hedge about him. He serves thee indeed perfectly and uprightly ; I confess I have nothing to lay to his charge : but doth he serve thee for nought ? But take away thy hedge, suffer me to winnow him, and thou shalt quickly see I shall have somewhat to lay to his charge, and that no small matter neither : for do but take away thy blessing from him, wherewith thou hast so abundantly blessed him, and he will soon curse thee to thy face.

Well, the Lord giveth him leave to try if he can stain Job's uprightness and perfection : and now begins the trial, whether the Devil's temptations shall bring him to sin, or the fear of the Lord prevail to preserve him from sin.

First, the Devil hath power to touch all he hath ; which he soon doth.

What doth this produce ? Doth he sin against the Lord, doth he murmur, doth he blaspheme, as the Devil had said ? No ; he fell on the ground and worshipped, acknowledging all to be the Lord's, and blessing his name. So that, in all this sore affliction, he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly, Job i. 20, 21, 22.

But the commendation which God had given him, of being a perfect and upright man, fearing God and eschewing evil, still remains and stands good against Satan, chap. ii. 3.

Satan gets leave to try him yet further, insinuating against him, that if he may have liberty to smite his body, he shall easily prevail upon him to sin ; not being able at present to bring in any plea against

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his perfection and uprightness, against his fearing God and eschewing evil. But this hath the same success with the former; for he could not bring Job to sin with his lips, ver. 10.

Now mind, Can any man, that hath his heart made upright by the Lord, keep that integrity, and sin? Is not every sin a departing from the purity, from the integrity? Was not every transgression against the first covenant, out of the first covenant, even a departing from the limits of it? Is not every transgression of the second covenant a departing out of the limits of the second covenant? He that abideth in Christ, doth he sin? Can he sin? Doth not he that sins depart out of his light, out of his life, out of his power, into the darkness, into the death, into the temptation of the enemy? Is it not promised, I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me: while the fear which God puts into the heart abides there, can that man sin? Doth not the pure fear cleanse the heart, and keep it clean, that the conscience may be void of offence, both towards God and man? Is the conscience void of offence, where sin is committed either against God or man? When the blood flows in the pure light, doth it not wash? Doth it not wash clean? Doth it not make whiter than the snow? When sin is entered into afterwards, and committed again, doth it not defile? Oh! read in the true sense, in the true experience, with the true understanding, which God gives.

VII.

Concerning Imputation of Righteousness.

THE scripture saith, that Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness; and that so it shall be also to all that believe as he did, even in the same power which he believed in, Rom. iv. 23, 24.

Now thus we witness the thing: our minds being turned from sin, and turned to the pure gift of God, that works a change in us. Herein we feel faith spring up, which fastens our spirits to the power of life; and then we feel that (in the power of life) flow upon our spirits, which washeth away our sin; and all that is done in this holy and righteous faith, is of the holy, righteous life and power, and accepted with the Lord; and that which condemns sin in us, never condemns any work which is wrought in God, but justifies it. So that the root of sin, with all that flows from it, is condemned by the righteous principle of life; but the root of holiness, with all that flows from it, is justified. And this is our righteousness, even Christ the holy power of life, who condemns and casts out sin: and it is great joy to any of us to feel the root of sin struck at, and condemned by his power, and him casting sin out of us, and the root of righteousness growing up in us, and bearing us, and causing us to bring forth fruit to God. And here we sensibly find we have right to the scriptures, to the promises, to all that Christ did and suffered for us, and witness the propitiation by and through him, and bless God for all the dispensations of life, wherein he hath appeared to the children of men in any age, which were all glorious and excellent in their season; but the dispensation of the spirit is the standing dispensation,

fation, which excels in glory, which Christ, in the days of his flesh, pointed his disciples to wait for, which his going away was to make way for. This dispensation was revealed and set up before the apostasy from the life and spirit of the apostles, and is again revealed and set up in power and great glory, after the long night of apostasy; blessed be the name of the Lord for ever. For the darkness is already passed away from many spirits, and the true light again shineth. Glory in the highest to the God of life and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

VIII.

Concerning Justification and Sanctification, some Things which it hath pleased the Lord, in his tender Mercy, to give me to experience.

First, **T**HAT it is the same Christ, the same spirit, the same life, the same wisdom, the same power, the same goodness, love and mercy, the same water, the same blood, which both justifies and sanctifies.

Secondly, That justification and sanctification go hand in hand together. There is none justified, but he that is in measure sanctified: and there is none sanctified, but he that is in measure justified. For God justifieth by a rule (by the new covenant, and according to the law thereof); and men receive and partake of justification, according as they are brought into, and kept within, the compass of the rule. For God acted of old towards, and justified, the children of the old covenant according to the law thereof; and the children of the new covenant are justified, and partake of justification, according to the law thereof.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That justification and sanctification are both of and through grace. It is so in the beginning, and it is so all along. "Through grace ye are saved," saith the apostle. The whole work of salvation is begun and carried on through grace. It is through that God visits and reaches to the soul, with his quickening virtue and power. He regenerates also thereby; through that he justifies; through that he sanctifies, &c. So that as the work goes on by grace, grace is to be cried to him that does the work, from his very laying the foundation, and fastening the soul thereupon, to his very laying on of the top stone.

Fourthly, Though justification and sanctification be of God's grace and mercy in Christ; yet this doth not exclude faith: but they are also through faith, and not without it. God doth not justify man in the unbelieving state, in the dead state, in his abiding there; but in the coming out of it, in the repenting and turning from the dead works to the living God, and in believing in him: and so he also sanctifies him.

Fifthly, Faith and obedience are of the same nature, and always go together. So that where-ever there is faith, there is obedience likewise; and where-ever there is obedience, there is faith. Obedience flows from faith, and cannot be without it; for the very nature and virtue of faith is in it. And faith is obedience. For this is the commandment of God, that the soul believe on him (and in his appearances) whom he hath sent to save: and this believing is obedience unto him that commands it. And this faith and this obedience is holy and just in God's sight, and through it (but not without it); and thus the soul is both justified and sanctified.

Sixthly, That the works of faith, the works of the new life, are not the works of the law, the works of the old covenant; nor are excluded justification,

fication, as the works of the old covenant are. For I have found the Lord, who hath condemned and excluded all my doings, which ever I have been able to do of myself, still justify and accept what his spirit and holy power hath done in me. They are not of the same nature in themselves; nor are they so accounted of in the eye of the Lord. For the Lord distinguisheth between root and root: and what springeth from the holy root, he justifieth as holy; and what ariseth from the unholy root, he condemneth as unholy.

Seventhly, That by the law of faith all boasting is excluded, in the whole work both of justification and sanctification. What is the law of faith? Is not its law to receive all from the Son, to do all in the Son; to quit self, and its own ability, and to perform all in the newness of the spirit, in the ability which is of God, given and continued in and through his grace and mercy to the soul in the Lord Jesus Christ? All the veins of life, all the strains of the new covenant run here. Here is no boasting of the creature; here can be no boasting: for all its ability and strength is shut out; and that which is given of God to it, is all and doth all. Yet every Jew here hath praise of God. His faith is commended, his love is commended, his faithfulness is commended, his zeal for the Lord, his obedience to the Lord, his patience in sufferings is commended, &c. But the praise and honour of all redounds not to his flesh, but to the spirit and grace of God in him; so that here flesh is laid low, and kept in the dust for ever, and God alone exalted in this day of his pure power in the heart. He that truly believeth, entereth into rest. How into rest? From what doth he rest? Why, from his own works? From the works of the flesh, from the works of the old covenant, from the works that arises from his own ability, from the works wherein he can never be justified with

with the gospel-justification. But doth he cease from the works of faith? Doth he cease from the labour of love? Doth he cease from obedience to any thing that God requires? Nay, then, surely he rather becometh to work and labour in the vineyard; and his labour is not in vain in the Lord.

IX.

Concerning Faith.

Several Things I have experienced, both concerning the Nature, Virtue, and Operations of it; some whereof (as I feel them spring up livingly in my Heart) I may mention at this time.

First, **T**HIS I have often experienced, that it is an hard thing truly and rightly to believe. It is an easy matter to believe notions concerning God, and concerning Christ: but to believe in God, to believe in Christ, to believe in him that raised up Jesus, to believe in the light, life, and power, which flows from Jesus; this is the gift of Christ Jesus.

Secondly, I have experienced this also, that faith is God's gift, and that it flows from the power of his life.

There is first a quickening, first a touching of the heart by the holy, pure power of the Lord; and when a man is touched and quickened, then in, and by, and through the virtue which flows into him, he can believe in that which toucheth and quickeneth him.

Thirdly, That faith never stands in a man's own power, but always in the virtue and power of the life of the Son. So that he that will believe aright, must wait to feel the life of the Son revealed in him,

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and faith flowing therefrom : for the true belief springs from the life of the holy root ; and from the flowing up and springing up of that life, faith receives its nourishment and daily virtue.

Fourthly, I have observed this in my travels, that the earthly wisdom, and notions therefrom, got into the mind, and held in the mind, out of the sense of life, are a great lett to faith : for these strengthen and nourish that in man, which is to be weakened and die ; that life, and the birth of life, may be all in all in the heart. Man is to die, man is to be ceased from ; his understanding, his wisdom, is to be brought to nought. But after it hath had a stroke and wound from God's Holy Spirit and power (even in the very wound which tends to death) yet it will be getting life again, getting its deadly wound healed, and nourishing its life by notions concerning that life and power, which in measure slew it. And thus the Jew outward hath his life in the outwardness of knowledge, in the outwardness of the law, in the letter which killeth : the relation and outward knowledge of things killeth and deadeneth more and more, unless man come into the inward life and virtue, and daily feel them quickened there. " If ye live in the spirit, walk in the spirit," said the apostle. A man cannot live in an outwardness of knowledge concerning the spirit and power of the endless life ; but he that would truly live, must live in the spirit itself ; and he that would rightly walk on in his way, must walk in the spirit wherein he received life, and wherein he that abideth lives before the Lord.

Fifthly, This I have also observed, that all notional faith, wherein is not the living virtue (as concerning Christ, his sufferings, death, resurrection, ascension, intercession ; and concerning justification by him, &c.) the enemy will let the soul alone with, and let him enjoy a kind of peace in ; but

but his war is desperately against the true faith, against faith in the true power, against faith in the light of life. O how many fore and sharp assaults doth he make, against the faith which receives its virtue from God, and causeth the soul to live to God ? And how fore is it with the soul, when faith is weak, and the enemy comes on against it with the strength of his assaults and temptations. " Lord, increase our faith," said the sensible disciples.

Sixthly, It is a precious thing to feel faith quickened by God, and helped by God against the enemy. For the enemy cannot prevail against the soul ; but the soul, through the virtue and power of life, prevails over the enemy in the faith. And this is the great work of a Christian, not only to wrestle and fight, but to learn so to wrestle, and so to fight, as to overcome.

Seventhly, That in the pure fear (not that which is taught by the precepts of men, but which God puts into the heart) faith has its strength, and exerciseth its strength.

O who knows the preciousness of this fear !

The power of faith, the power of life, the power of salvation and everlasting preservation is revealed in it. Therefore saith the Lord (when he speaketh of providing for his children in the new covenant, that they shall abide with him for ever, and not depart any more from him as the children of the old covenant did) " I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." And when the angel preached the everlasting gospel, how did he preach it ? " Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come," &c. Rev. xiv. When the pure fear is felt, when that which is contrary to God is judged, then the gospel is known, and the work thereof experienced in the heart. And how easy is it, when the pure fear is felt, to distrust and deny one's self, and trust in the

Lord! O how weak are the reasonings and imaginations then, and how strong is the power which scatters them, and lifts up the head over them!

Now it concerns every one deeply to consider, of what nature his faith is, and what virtue is in it, and what it can do in and through the power of the Lord for him, how it fetcheth in the true living nourishment every day, how it delivers the soul, and gives it victory over that, which faith was appointed to deliver from. For he, who through the faith overcometh that which is contrary to God, shall inherit; and he that fights the good fight of faith shall overcome; but he that overcomes not his enemies, which stand in his way, shall be sure to be hindered by them from attaining to his journey's end.

X.

Concerning Obedience, some Experiences also.

First, **T**RUE obedience, gospel-obedience, flows from the life, flows from the living faith. If I could obey in all things that God requires of me, yet that would not satisfy me, unless I felt my obedience flow from the birth of his life in me. My Father doth all in me, saith Christ. This was Christ's comfort: and to feel Christ do all in the soul, is the comfort of every one that truly believes in him.

Secondly, True obedience, gospel-obedience, is natural to the birth which is born of God. It is unnatural to the flesh, to man's wisdom, to deny himself, and take up the cross: but it is natural to the birth which is born of God's Spirit. "That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit," and it is natural to it to be conversant in, and exercised about that which is spiritual.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That honouring and pleasing, and answering the will of the Lord, is the proper aim of the truly obedient. O how do they delight to do the will! "I have meat," saith Christ, "that ye know not of." To do the will was his meat and drink: and it is meat and drink to all that are of his nature and spirit. If I should never have any other reward, but the pleasure of obedience, yet I could not but say and testify, that in answering the law of the pure life, in keeping the holy statutes and commandments of God's Spirit, there is great reward. But yet there is a crown also, and a reaping after this life, of every thing that is sown to the Spirit: and the crown is weighty, and everlastingly glorious.

Fourthly, Gospel-obedience is exceeding necessary in and to the gospel-state. Mark; the Lamb is the leader: and can any be saved by him, but they that follow him? When Christ calls out of the world, must not the soul come to him, who is the Shepherd? And must not the sheep daily learn to know his voice, and follow him; even till they come to be acquainted with every moving, drawing, and leading of his Spirit, and so come to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes? Mark; what a weight Christ layeth upon doing. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Why, then the disciple cannot come to happiness, but in the doing, in the obeying of the will of Christ, his Lord and Master. And "he that heareth these sayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him to a wise man, that built his house on a rock." But the pretended believer, without doing the will, is the foolish builder, whose building will not stand. Again, saith Christ, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in
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“ my love ; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”

The disciples, whom he most dearly loved, must keep his commandments, if they will continue in his love. And his apostles taught the same, even the working out of the salvation, and the purifying of the heart through the obedience of the truth. For mark ; there is a covenant of life, a way of life : and how can life be reaped, how can the work of life go on, but in subjection and obedience thereto ?

Oh ! blessed is he, who meets with the power of life, which enables to obey, and who is obedient and subject to that power. For he that truly believes in Christ, is turned by him to his light, and to the power of his Father ; and the peace, growth, joy, blessedness, &c. is witnessed in subjection thereto.

XI.

Concerning the Cross of Christ.

THIS I have experienced concerning the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ; that it is an inward and spiritual thing, producing inward and spiritual effects in the mind ; and that this is it, even that which slays the enmity in the mind, and crucifies to the world, and the affections thereof. “ God forbid,” said the apostle, “ that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

Now mark ; that which is contrary to the world, and crucifies to the world, that is the cross. The cross hath this power, and nothing else ; and so there is nothing else to glory in. “ The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh ;” and

“ and these are contrary one to the other.” Mind, here is the cross : the Spirit which is contrary to the flesh, which mortifies the flesh, through the obedience whereof the flesh is crucified. “ If ye, through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” Whatsoever is of and in the Spirit, is contrary to the flesh. The light of the Spirit is contrary to the darkness of the flesh. The holiness of the Spirit is contrary to the unholiness of the corrupt heart. The life of the Spirit is contrary to the life (or rather death) that is in sin. The power of the Spirit is contrary to the power that is in Satan, and his kingdom. The wisdom of God is contrary, and a foolish thing, to the wisdom of man. Yea, the new creature, which springs from God’s Holy Spirit, is contrary, and death to the old. Now he that comes hither, out of his own wisdom, out of his own will, out of his own thoughts, out of his own reasonings, and comes to a discerning of God’s Spirit, and to the feeling of his begetting of life in his heart, and his stirrings and movings in the life which he hath begotten ; and waits here ; and receives council here ; he is taught to deny himself, and to join to and take up that, by which Christ daily crosseth and subdueth in him that which is contrary to God.

And here is the light of faith, and the good travel under the cross, whereby the holy journey is gone, and the enemies (which rise up to oppose in the way) vanquished and overcome. For here is the power revealed, the preserving power, the leading power, the conquering power of him, who rideth on conquering and to conquer his spiritual enemies in the hearts of his children, who know his voice, and are subject to him ; who daily denying themselves, and taking up his cross, follow him. Woe is to them that are at ease in Sion, under any thing that is contrary to God ; but blessings are upon them whose dwelling

dwelling is under the cross, and who know no ease, but what it allows. It will make truth, life, holiness, righteousness, faith, obedience, meekness, patience, love, separation from sin, communion with the Lord, and all the fruits of the Spirit, as natural to them in the renewed state, as ever sin was in the corrupt state. And in that state they shall be able to say with Paul, who once complained of his captivity, and that he did what he hated; yet after he had known the power of the cross, and was crucified with Christ, he could then do nothing against the truth, but for the truth; yea, then, being a conqueror, having overcome the enemies which stood in his way, he could do all things through Christ that strengthened him. The cause of so many complaints and bowings down the head, and going mourning because of the prevailings of the enemy, through temptations, sin, and corruption, is because the cross of Christ, which is the power of God (which is his ordinance against the strength of the enemy) is either not known, or not taken up. And this is the reason that many that make a fair shew for a while, yet afterwards come to nothing (but are like untimely figs, or like corn upon the house tops, which hastily springeth up, and withereth) because they either never rightly learn, or keep not the cross. For that alone hath power from God to bring down, and keep down, that which is contrary to him. So that from under the cross of Christ, there is no witnessing salvation or preservation from the Lord; but out of the limits of the cross, the enemy hath power to recover and bring back under his dominion again. And whosoever in his travels leaves the cross behind him, does draw back unto perdition, and not travel on, in the living faith and newness of obedience, towards the salvation of the soul.

XII.

XII.

Concerning the Mystery of Life, and the Mystery of the Fellowship which is therein.

GOD is hid from man, as he lies in his sinful and fallen state; and no man can find or know him, but as he pleaseth to reveal himself by his own blessed Spirit. And Christ, being God's image, there is no knowing or confessing him, or right calling him Lord, but in and by the same Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 3. When he appeared in the days of his flesh, flesh and blood could not reveal him, but only the Father. And he is the same to-day as he was yesterday. He is not to be known now, but in the same Spirit; in his own grace and truth, in a measure of his own life. The dead cannot know him: they only know him, who are his sheep, who are quickened and made alive by him. And this life is a mystery: none can understand it, but they that partake of it. Can a man that is naturally dead, know what the life of nature means? No more can a man that is spiritually dead, know what the life of the Spirit means. The natural man may get the words that came from life, and cry up them, and speak great words of the fame of wisdom, and of her children; but the thing itself is hid from them all. Oh! it is a strait gate, at which the birth enters, at which none else can enter. The wise and prudent knowers and searchers after the flesh (and of the scriptures, as they can put meanings upon them and comprehend them) are shut out in every age; but there is a babe born of naked truth, born of the pure simplicity, admitted by God, while men disdain and despise it.

And the fellowship of the saints is in the life, and in the light, which is this mystery. The fellowship

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is not outward, but inward. All they that meet together in the outward place, are not in the fellowship or worship; but only they that meet together in the inward life and spirit. "They that worship the Father, must worship him in spirit and truth." Look, there is the worship, there are the worshippers; they that are in the spirit, in the truth; they that meet in the spirit, in the truth, meet together in the one spiritual place, as I may call it. And so we own no man after the flesh, no man according to the appearance; but, in the righteous judgment of the spirit, those only who are of the spirit. Indeed we are tender, where there is the least beginning of the work of God in any heart; yea, where there is but so much as a conviction of the understanding; but men are not presently of us, who own our principle in words or outward appearance, but only such as are inwardly changed thereby in the heart. It is true, persons may walk among us, and afterwards go out from us, who were never of us (as it was in the apostles days) that were never in the fellowship of life with us, whom we could never own in the sight of the Lord, as being born of him; though we were willing to wait and watch for their good, that they might come to witness the true birth. Now from such come the offences, even from the falling off of such as never were truly ingrafted, and also from the slips of such who are not watchful to that which preserves. And woe is to the world, because of the offences which cannot but come. For they which are to be approved in the sight of the Lord, must not somewhat or other happen to make them manifest? And when they are made manifest, the world's eye is offended, and is apt to think hardly of, and reproach the truth itself, because of them. Blessed is the eye which sees into the mystery, into the life itself, where

where there is no offence. Truth is one and the same for ever.

XIII.

Concerning judging according to the Appearance, and judging righteous Judgment. Judge not according to the Appearance (saith Christ) but judge righteous Judgment, John vii. 24.

WHAT is it to judge according to the appearance? and what is it to judge righteous judgment? I shall speak what I have experienced, having been deeply exercised about this thing. Mark then;

The holy spirit of life breatheth upon the heart; and, by his breathing and working there, he quickens and begets life, John iii. 8. And that which is begotten and born of him, is begotten and born in his nature, and so is of the same nature with him: as verse the 6th of that chapter.

Now to that which is born of the spirit, the spirit is the leader, the preserver, the supporter; the comforter, the daily quickener. He can do nothing without the spirit, without the present life and power of him that begat him: so that all the judgment which the birth of life hath, is from, and of, and in, the Holy Spirit of the Father.

And here is true judgment, both concerning righteousness, and against all unrighteousness; so that to keep the life, keep to the spirit, keep to the birth, keep to the power, then is the wisdom and righteous judgment of God revealed: but any that go out of this, and measure without this, they measure in the unrighteousness; and though they search the scriptures, and think in themselves they measure from the scriptures, yet they are mistaken, and measure but from their

own knowledge and apprehensions upon the scriptures, as the Scribes and Pharisees did, when they seemed to conclude, upon searching the scriptures, that Christ could not be the Messiah, John vii. 52. "Search and look" (said they) "for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." How then can this Galilean be he? See by the scriptures, if this can be the Christ.

It is said of Christ, "He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness shall he judge," &c. Isai. xi. 3, 4. Christ judged righteous judgment. How came he to judge so? Why; he judged in and with the spirit. He kept to the spirit's judgment. The spirit of the Lord rested upon him, and made him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord, ver. 2, 3. And no man can judge aright concerning the things of God, but in and by the same spirit. How shall I know whether my duties be right, my prayers right, my ways right, my worship right, my faith right, my hope of the right kind, my knowledge and understanding of the scriptures right? &c. Why; there is none but one can determine. He who begetteth life, knows whether that which is in thee be from his life; and whether that which thou offerest to him, be truly living or no: and when the Lord separates the living from the dead, what will remain in many that make great professions at this day?

I would have no man mistaken about these things; I know many are deeply mistaken, as their own hearts will one day acknowledge, when the Lord shall make manifest to them, how they have called evil good, and good evil; and put darkness for light, and light for darkness. Indeed it is just as it was in the days of Christ's appearing outwardly in a body of flesh. The same life, the same spirit, is denied now as was then. Then the Jews cried up

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Christ to come; but they then spiritually saw him not. They saw the flesh (or outward form) but they saw not him who dwelt in that flesh. And though the world of Christians now acknowledge Christ is come, and did appear, yet neither do they know him who did appear, but deny his life, his spirit, his virtue, his power, which is revealed in this day of his love and goodness to the eyes of the children of the true wisdom. "Oh! let not flesh judge: be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord, and cease judging, for he is arisen to judge. He is judge in the midst of his people, and he will judge the heathen also."

And every one bring this near. Wait to feel flesh judged in thee, and brought down in thee, that it may not judge in thee; but spirit and life may be exalted, and sit upon the throne in thy heart: and when life is exalted, and doth begin to judge, Oh! take heed of hearkening to the flesh, of letting in the judgment of flesh afterwards, lest the spirit be grieved and quenched! For the wisdom of the flesh is near, and will be striving to get in and recover its seat again; and if the watch be not singly kept to God's Holy Spirit, somewhat else will be judging in thee, which will judge according to the appearance of things to thy mind, and so thou wilt miss of the true and righteous judgment of God's Spirit.

XIV.

A Question answered about knowing God's Spirit.

QUEST. **H**OW shall I know God's Spirit? How shall I know the motions thereof? How may I know whether the faith and hope in my heart be from him? Whether my prayers and desires arise thence? &c.

ANSW.

ANWS. No man of himself, or by any way he of himself can take, can know God's Spirit: there must first be a capacity given before any man can know the Spirit of the Lord; his life, his power, must first be felt, and somewhat quickened, somewhat formed by him, somewhat begotten of him, which is Spirit, and this can know him. Now, man in this may know him, but out of this can never know him. Therefore this is the great skill, and diligence, and wisdom of a Christian, to keep to this, to wait for this, to have his eye toward the pure spring of wisdom, that, when it springs, he may discern and receive it; and when that which is of a contrary nature springs, he may discern it under all its deceitful appearances, and turn from it. For out of the heart are the issues both of life and death. There is all manner of deceivableness of unrighteousness in the unrighteous nature, in the unrighteous spirit; and if the watch be not diligently kept, it is easy to be deceived at any time: but the true seed, the holy seed, the living seed, the elect seed, the immortal seed, is never deceived. Oh! blessed are they who have their eyes opened and kept open in it, to discern the mystery of godliness and the mystery of iniquity, that they may be preserved safe in the one, out of the reach of the other!

XV.

Some Queries concerning the Seed of the Kingdom, in which the Kingdom itself is contained, (as the Nature and Substance of Things is contained in the Seed thereof) and out of which it springeth up and ariseth in the Heart.

QUERY 1. **W**HAT is that seed which is spoken of, 1 John iii. 9. which remaineth in those that are born of God, and preserveth out of sin those that are led by it and comprehended in it? Is it not the seed of the kingdom?

QUERY 2. Do not the natural herbs and flowers, the natural plants and trees, grow from a natural seed? Do not the spiritual plants, the spiritual trees, the trees of righteousness, grow from the seed of righteousness?

QUERY 3. Was it not the great doctrine of Christ to preach the kingdom? and how did he preach it? Did he not preach it as a seed, as a grain of mustard-seed? and did he not liken this spiritual seed to leaven, to a precious pearl, to treasure hid in a field, to a piece of silver lost, &c. Oh! how happy is he who knows and enjoys the thing itself which Christ preached! All the prophets prophesied concerning him; and when he came, this was his doctrine, that men should mind this, look after this, purchase this, possess this, feel this planted and grow up in them, and themselves ingrafted into and growing up in it.

QUERY 4. Can any man be born of God, and not born of this seed? Can any man be born of this seed, and not be born of God?

QUERY 5. How doth grace and truth come by Jesus Christ? Doth it not grow up from this seed? Can it grow up any other way in any heart?

QUERY 6. Is not salvation felt and witnessed in every heart (of those that are in any measure redeemed) as this seed grows up and overshadows them? Was not this the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time, 1 Pet. i. 10. whereof the apostle Peter himself was made a partaker? Chap. v. 10. In the law were the shadows of good things to come; but in the gospel the substance, the seed itself, is revealed.

QUERY 7. Is it not the right beginning in religion to begin in the spirit? And can any begin in the spirit, but he that begins in and with the seed of the kingdom?

QUERY 8. Is it not the main and chief thing in religion to know this seed, to feel this seed, to be joined to this seed, and abide in this seed?

QUERY 9. Is not all that flows from this seed true and certain? Is not the knowledge certain here? the faith here? the love here? the peace here? the joy here? the righteousness here? From this true root, can there grow or shoot forth any thing but that which is true? Oh! every breathing here is from pure life, and precious in the eye of the Father. Is there any certainty elsewhere? Oh! when the Lord appears, will he not disown all the religion and worship which is not of this growth?

QUERY 10. But some may say, How may I know this seed, and how may I be joined to it?

ANSW. In the quickening life mayest thou know it, and no where else. Didst thou ever feel that which quickened thy heart towards the Lord? Therein and thereby, at that time, thou mayst feel an eye and heart opened, which can truly see and know somewhat of God: and, keeping thy eye to the quickening power of God, as that stirs, moves, and operates, in thee and upon thee, thou mayest know again and know more.

Therefore

Therefore eye the power which quickens, and eye the seed which it reveals and raiseth in thee, and wait to feel the power subjecting thee to the seed, that thou mayest come under it, and it may come over thee, and press down in thee all that is contrary to its pure nature.

And as thou comest hither, thou wilt find that which death hath no power over; and, as thou abidest there, thou shalt find it to have no power over thee. For, of a truth, in the holy covenant of life and peace, death never had nor can have power; but he who abideth in him who is the covenant, who is the shepherd, who is the love, who is the wisdom and power of God, witnesseth there a sure defence and strong tower, where salvation is for a wall and bulwark against the enemy.

There are many sorts of talkers concerning the thing, but there are few travellers into it; but he alone who is a true traveller into it, and takes up his rest there, certainly knows and can truly witness what is to be found there. And this is the reason, that so many (who seem great and experienced knowers) cannot receive our testimony, because they know neither the seed nor its voice, concerning which and whereby we testify. But wisdom is justified of her children; and they that know the voice of the shepherd, know his present appearance in this our day, which is contrary to the wisdom and knowledge of all other seeds and births whatsoever. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear;" but he that hath not the true ear, cannot hear the true testimony, though it should ever so often be declared unto him. But blessed is he that knows, and stumbles not at the appearances of the seed and power of life in his own heart, but is turned from the darkness to the light there, and from the power of Satan to the manifestation of God's spirit there. For the end of words (even of Christ's own direc-

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tions in the days of his flesh) is to turn men to the holy life and power from whence the words came; and thither man is to travel, and therein to enter, waiting on the Lord, in the way of his judgments and tender mercies, to witness a translation from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the dear Son; which kingdom is at first but as a grain of mustard-seed, and must be so known and so received.

And now let every serious heart examine concerning himself. Dost thou know the kingdom? Is the seed grown in thee? Doth it overspread thee? Art thou in it as in a kingdom? Dost thou feel it overshadowing thee? Art thou in unity with it? Doth it speak peace to thee from the Lord? Is the wall of partition broken down in thee? Is there of twain made one new man? Dost thou feel that which is contrary to Christ, subdued in thee by his power, and his holy nature, life, and spirit, reigning over it? Canst thou read that scripture sensibly and experimentally, "If ye through the spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live?"

Ah! how miserably do men talk of Christ, the power of God, and miss of the effect and work of his power in them!

Faith is a powerful thing, it gives victory, (true faith gives victory) it scatters that which stands between, and gives real access to God, and lets in his pure, fresh, living virtue upon the heart.

Love is a powerful thing, it constrains to obedience: and the heart that is circumcised to love the Lord God, Oh! how doth life flow from him into it!

Oh! away with empty notions, and come to the ministration of the spirit, where the knowledge is living, the faith victorious, the love pure and undefiled, the worship truly spiritual, even flowing from, and comprehended in, the life and virtue of the

the spirit. Oh! that all that truly breathe after the Lord might be gathered hither, found here, and dwell here. Amen.

POSTSCRIPT to the EXPERIENCES.

PERSONS that have had some true touches of life, and true breathings after the Lord, yet not having their eye rightly fixed upon him, nor discerning from whence those came, easily lose the true sense of life, and another birth of another nature springs up in them instead thereof. This was it we generally wanted in the day of our former profession, even the discerning of that, and fixing upon that which begat life in us; through want whereof many of the most tender-hearted came to a loss, whom the Lord at length shewed mercy to, manifesting to them the light of their eyes, and the stay of their souls. Now to all that have been gathered hither by the Lord, life hath been renewed; and their former experiences, of the Lord and his goodness to them in the Lord Jesus Christ, restored again with advantage. And here they sensibly see, and daily experience, that nothing is of their own works, but all of grace and mercy in and through Christ, in whom they are created unto good works, which God before ordained that we should walk in them. And here the glory is revealed; the glory of life, the glory of peace with the Lord, the glory of righteousness in and through his Son, the glory of victory over the soul's enemies, and of leading captivity captive, and treading upon the necks of kings, even of mighty lusts, which mightily prevailed over and oppressed the soul, before the captain of our salvation appeared in the power and authority

authority of his own spirit. But, blessed be the Lord, there is not only this glory revealed, but there is a defence over the glory; for there is that revealed which is able to defend it, and doth defend it, in the hearts of many, and in the living assemblies which have been gathered by God's holy power; which holy power (which gathered) daily quickens and overshadows, and is a rock unto, and will be so for ever, even to all that abide with him in his holy covenant; but out of the limits of that into which God gathers, and wherein and whereby he preserves, there is no defence to any. The cursed thing, the unclean thing, the earthly spirit, the earthly mind and wisdom, the Lord hath excluded, and it is to be excluded out of his camp for evermore, that the inward Israel may be kept holy to the Lord, and may serve and worship the Lord in the beauty of the inward holiness; as the outward Israel was outwardly to be, and to do, in that outward ministration of the shadows of the gospel state.

XVI.

Some QUERIES concerning the Time and Work of Reformation.

QUERY 1. **W**HAT did the time of reformation and substance (spoken of Heb. ix. 10.) signify and point at in relation to the mystery? Was it not for the bringing in of the gospel; the day of Christ's spirit and power; the day of his inward renewing and reforming; the day of his taking his fan into his hand to purge his floor; the laying his axe to the root of the corrupt tree, that he may destroy the works of the Devil in mens hearts, casting down and plucking up what his heavenly

heavenly Father hath not planted there? When he cometh as a refiner's fire, and fuller's soap, to purify the sons of Levi, as gold and silver is purged, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness: is not this the time of reformation?

QUERY 2. Who is the reformer? Is it not the Lord Jesus Christ? Doth not he create anew? Doth not he blot out the old image, and form into a new lump? For if any man be in Christ, there is a renewing there; a new building there; yea, old things are passed away there; there is nothing in him but what is new. He is faithful, in all his house, inwardly to judge, condemn, crucify, subdue, destroy whatsoever is contrary to the nature and spirit of his Father, and to form and build up the spirits of his, in that which is new and pure.

QUERY 3. How, or by what, doth Christ reform? Is it not by his spirit and power, by the light thereof, by the life thereof, by the virtue thereof? For nothing can change and reform the heart, but that which is more powerful than him who corrupteth it.

QUERY 4. Where doth Christ reform and new-create? Is it not in the new covenant; in the faith and obedience thereof? Doth he not, by the laws thereof, break and disannul the laws of the old covenant, and make void the covenant of hell and death; and so make an everlasting covenant of life and peace; even an holy, pure, living agreement, between God his Father, and the souls of his? Thus by his light he overcomes darkness; by his life he overcomes death; by his pure nature and spirit he overcomes, chains down, subdues, and destroys, that which is impure, breaking the bond of sin and iniquity, and letting the oppressed go free from under it. Thus he manifests himself to be the Saviour by his holy anointing, breaking the yoke of the oppressor, *Isai. x. 27.*

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QUERY 5. Whom doth Christ reform? Are they not those who take his yoke upon them, and learn of him? Are they not those who are turned to the light of his spirit, inwardly made manifest; turned from the darkness, walking no more therein, but in his pure light? They that own his inward appearance in their hearts, and turn, from the enmity there, to him, receiving his light, his law, his life, his spirit, them doth he exercise daily, and is daily reforming their hearts and ways thereby. But if any man receiveth not his light, his life, his spirit within, such an one is none of his; and he may reform himself as much as he can, but he knoweth not yet the day of the true reformation.

QUERY 6. How are they to walk whom Christ hath begun to reform? Is it not in that light, in that spirit, in that covenant, in that grace, wherein and whereby he hath in some measure reformed them? Is it not in the newness of the spirit, and in the newness of the law thereof? Here Christ walked before the Father in all well-pleasing ("Lo, I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart" said he, Psal. xl. 7, 8.) and here all his are also to walk, 1 John ii. 6. For indeed there is no pleasing the Father, or Christ our Lord and master, out of the virtue, life, and newness of his own spirit.

QUERY 7. What was the glory that was to follow the sufferings of Christ, spoken of, 1 Pet. i. 11? Was it not the glory of his inward reformation in the hearts of the children of the new covenant? Doth not Christ give of his grace in the gospel? And doth not his grace make a glorious change? Doth not he give of his spirit to his children? And doth not his spirit change from sin, from shame, into holiness, into true beauty, into the heavenly glory, and so from glory to glory, translating more and more into the glory? Doth not Christ appear gloriously

riously in the hearts of his, and in the assemblies of his, who meet together in his name, and wait upon him in that which is pure and living of him? And is there not a covering, or defence of the wing of the Almighty, upon the glory? Isai. iv. 5.

QUERY 8. Was not this glory brought forth in the days of the apostles? Was not great grace then upon them all? (I mean such as received and held the truth in the love of it). Did they not witness the peace which passeth man's understanding? Had they not received the holy and spiritual understanding from him that is true; and were they not in him that is true? Did they not know victory and dominion over sin and death? Did not the little babes witness pardon of sin, and know him who preserveth from sin? Had not the young men overcome the wicked one; and were not the elders strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might? Were they not come to the spiritual Sion, and heavenly Jerusalem; and did they not walk in the light of the Lamb, and of the holy city, before God the judge of all? There is no man, in these our days, can so much as conceive the glory of that state, but he that hath tasted of a measure thereof.

QUERY 9. Was not this glory eclipsed; and did not a great darkness come over it, hiding it from the sons of men, so that for ages and generations they knew not the true spirit, the true light, the true life, the everlasting covenant, the holy gospel, the true church, the man-child, &c. but these, with many other heavenly mysteries, have been hid from their eyes.

QUERY 10. What hath got up since these have been hid? Have not the shadows of the night took place, and overspread the Christian state, instead of the light of the day? Hath not antichrist got up, and a false church appeared; that which hath been tender, and begotten of God, snibbed, bowed down, curbed,

curbed, and persecuted, and false devotion and worship set up instead of the true?

QUERY II. Must not antichrist be destroyed, the false church judged, the true church come out of the wilderness into which she fled, the man-child appear again, conquering and to conquer all which hath risen up from the spirit of darkness since the first breaking forth of the gospel? And is not the gospel to be preached again to them that dwell on earth; even to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people? Rev. xiv. 6.

Now who is wise to understand the appearance of the Lord, and the beginning of these things, which is in a way contrary to man's wisdom? and so he that will discern them, must come out from following of the man's own spirit, nature, and wisdom in himself, into the sense and leadings of him who giveth the true eye-sight. The appearance of the Lord is inward and spiritual, and he must have an inward and spiritual eye who discerneth it. It was said of old, by mockers and scoffers, Where is the promise of his coming? For all things continue as they were from the beginning. The same spirit will say so still; and yet, to that eye which the Lord hath opened, he is already come inwardly, spiritually, in his own pure eternal life and power; and the precious effects of his coming are made manifest in many hearts; blessed be his name. Yea, he is further to appear in glory and pure brightness; and so we wait further for his appearance, both in our own hearts, and in the hearts of the children of men. We have met with our beloved; our God, whom we waited for, hath appeared. The Son of Righteousness hath arisen, with healing under his wings, and we have felt virtue and healing from him, and cannot but rejoice and testify of his salvation.

And what further manifestations of himself he hath yet to give forth, we are sure to partake of, being

being formed by him in spirit, and found in that wherein he appears, and from whence his glory shines. Oh! that all that love the Lord Jesus Christ in any measure of sincerity, did know the way of the gospel, which is in the spirit, light, life, and power, which is eternal, even in the grace and truth which is in him! And his kingdom, which is spiritual, and not of this world, cannot be shaken by this world (nor his Mount Sion removed); but is able to shake all nations and kingdoms that kiss not the Son, but oppose him. Blessed are they who are turned to the light of his spirit, and who therein kiss and obey him.

II.

Some QUERIES concerning the Spirit of Christ, or the Spirit of the Father (it being one and the same Spirit) for those who take themselves to be Christians, and under the Gospel Dispensation, to consider and examine themselves by, that they may not be deceived, either concerning their present Estate here, or the eternal Estate of their Souls hereafter; seeing the Apostle so expressly saith, "If any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii.

QUERY I. **D**OST thou know the Holy Spirit of the Father? Thou mayest have read somewhat concerning it, and have apprehensions in thy mind about it; but dost thou truly know what it is by its inward appearances and operations in thine own heart?

QUERY 2. Hast thou received God's Holy Spirit into thy heart? Hast thou let in Christ's Spirit, when he hath knocked at the door of thy heart, and received him? For he that is a true child, most natu-

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rally breatheth and crieth for the Father's Spirit; and the Father also most naturally giveth his Spirit to them that truly and rightly ask it of him, Luke xi. 13. and thou must thankfully receive the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, when the Father gives him.

QUERY 3. Doth the Spirit of Christ dwell in thee? Hath the stronger man cast the stronger man out of thee, and taken possession of thy heart, and doth he dwell therein? Then thou mayst truly say, that thou art built up by God an habitation for him in the Spirit. Then thou art washed and cleansed by him from thy filthiness; and lusts or vain thoughts do not lodge in thee. For the Holy Spirit of Christ will not dwell where such things lodge; but come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty, in whom I will dwell and walk, 2 Cor. vi. 15, 16, 17.

QUERY 4. Doth God's Spirit lead thee into all truth that thou needest know and walk in? Art thou a true child, depending upon, and guided by, the Spirit of the Father? Canst thou not see thy way, but as he maketh it known to thee? Art thou a follower of the spotless Lamb, in the same Spirit wherein he walked? If it be thus with thee, then thou art a child of God indeed.

QUERY 5. Dost thou live in the Spirit? Dost thou feel the Spirit of God to be a fountain of life, from whence life springs up into thee daily? Dost thou witness that scripture fulfilled in thee, "He that believeth on me," as the scripture hath said, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water?" Hast thou received the living water from Christ? And is that living water become a well of life in thee?

QUERY

QUERY 6. Dost thou walk in the Spirit, in the life thereof, in the newness thereof springing up in thy heart? Dost thou know the difference between walking in the oldness of the letter, and in the newness of the Spirit?

QUERY 7. Didst thou ever learn of the Father to know Christ? And didst thou ever learn of Christ to know the Father? And hath the Father indeed revealed the Son to thee, and the Son indeed revealed the Father to thee? Or art thou yet only in the dead and dry notions, or barren comprehensions about these things?

QUERY 8. Dost thou know how the letter killeth, and how the Spirit quickeneth and maketh alive? And art thou made alive by the Spirit, and born of the heavenly water and Spirit, and so become spiritual as the scripture testifieth? "That which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit."

QUERY 9. Art thou come under the ministration of the Spirit? Dost thou know what the ministration of the Spirit is? Or dost thou only know what the letter saith concerning the ministration of the Spirit, but art altogether ignorant of the ministration itself?

QUERY 10. Dost thou know what the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus means? Hast thou ever received this law; the law of the new covenant; the holy law of life written in thy heart by the finger of God's Spirit? For the same Spirit that wrote the law of the letter in tables of stone, writeth the law of the Spirit in the fleshly tables of the heart.

QUERY 11. Dost thou not grieve the Holy Spirit, nor quench it, nor despise the prophesyings thereof in thine own heart? For Christ is a king, a priest, a prophet; and he ministers in his sanctuary, in his temple (which the holy renewed heart is), in and by his Spirit.

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QUERY 12. Dost thou know what the anointing is? Art thou anointed therewith? And doth thy whole ability lie therein, insomuch as that thou art daily sensible thou canst not do any thing of thyself, but still findest God working in thee, both to will and to do that which is right in his eyes, of his own good pleasure?

QUERY 13. Did thy religion begin in the Spirit? In the living ministration of the new covenant? Did thy knowledge begin so; to wit, in feeling God opening thy heart by his Spirit, and giving thee the understanding whereby thou mightest know him? Did thy faith begin in his power, and doth it stand in the same power to this day? Oh! that men were sensible what is the right religion, and of the inward appearance of God's holy arm and power, which alone can redeem, and save the soul out of the hands of its enemies?

QUERY 14. Doth thy worship stand in the Spirit, and inward life of truth in thy heart? Art thou such a worshipper as the Father hath sought out and made so? Or art thou a worshipper of thine own or other mens making? And dost thou keep within the limits of the living and spiritual worship, and not transgress the law thereof?

Oh! who would be mistaken and deceived about such weighty things as these, of so great necessity and concern? Who would miss of God's Spirit, and of the law and covenant of life in Christ Jesus, and be only in a dream concerning these things, without the true, demonstrative knowledge, possession, and enjoyment of them?

III.

III.

Of the true Way (the Way of Holiness, the Way of Life), and of the true Teaching and Knowledge.

CHRIST is the way, the only way to the Father; there is not another. Now every one that will truly know Christ, and come to Christ, must learn of the Father. It is written in the prophets, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me," said Christ. Here are two things necessary for every one that would come to Christ. One is hearing of the Father; the other is, learning that which he teacheth. For though a man do hear the living voice of the Father, yet if he do not learn and keep the instruction of life received from him, he may be drawn aside before he come to the Son. But he whose ears are opened to hear the voice, and who feels the instruction of life from the Father, to go to him in whom he hath placed life; here the Spirit of the Father secretly draws in the inward of a man's mind and spirit, from that which is really dead, to that which is truly living.

Now, when a man is come to the Son, in whom the Father hath placed the fulness of life, then he shall witness him to be the way to the Father, and he will teach him daily of the Father. And here is the state of true subjection to the Son experienced, whom the soul must hear, and of whom he is to learn in all things; who discovers the inward darkness in man's mind, and breaks down that in him which is contrary to God, having a daily cross ready for that which is to be crucified in him, whereby he shall

shall die daily to himself. And as he dies to himself, Christ will reveal himself more and more in him, and he shall feel the pure seed of life springing more and more up in him, and living in him, and he in it; in and through which he shall come more and more into union and fellowship with the Father of spirits, and the whole living body of his church and people.

But now, to learn of the Father to come to the Son, and to learn of the Son to know the Father, and to walk in newness of spirit before him (and not in an old dead knowledge and fleshly understanding), these are great mysteries, which none can learn by a literal conception and comprehension of things, but as they are quickened, and their minds and understandings opened, and kept open, by the Lord. Therefore this is the great skill and true wisdom, to know the Shepherd and his voice; and his manner of appearing, and to what he appears; which is to his own sheep, to the true birth. And his way and manner of appearing to that birth, is by visiting and reaching to it by his power opening it, thereby giving it to see, hear, and understand; but shutting up himself from the contrary nature, wisdom, and spirit in all men.

There is somewhat which maketh a fair shew in the fleshly part, as if it were of God; but God knoweth what and who are his. Now it is for the true children, that the milk of the word, and the bread of life is; and them the Lord is still gracious to, and heareth all the desires and breathings of their hearts; them he preserveth and visiteth in Egypt, and also bringeth out thence. Them he leadeth through the wilderness, dividing the Red Sea before them; before them also he divideth Jordan (the river of judgment), causing them to pass through it also, that they may enter into the Holy Land.

Land. And their lot he defendeth in the Holy Land, in their subjection to the spirit and law of life which rules there. But the contrary birth falleth short by the way, and cannot enter into, nor abide in, that which is pure and living of God.

Now in the lowly seed the whole mystery of life is learned, by those that come thither, and wait there, growing up into him who is the head; but no lesson of life, and of the truth as it is Jesus, is learned out of it. Oh! how careful had men need be to know this seed in themselves, and to witness its daily springing up and growth in them.

IV.

Concerning Separation from the Spirit and Ways of the World.

THERE is a necessity of separation from the spirit, ways, and worships of the world, by those that will be the Lord's people. The Jews outward were to be a separated people from all other people (from their gods, from their worships) if they would enjoy the favour of the Lord, and the blessings of the good land. God had separated them from all other nations, and they were not to mingle with them; neither in their worship, nor marriages, &c. So the Jews inward, who are God's gathering of spiritual worshippers, out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, are to be a separated and holy people to the Lord. For when God cast off the Jews, he sought out worshippers in their stead, even for a spiritual nation and holy people of inward Jews, instead of that outward people, outward place of worship, and outward land, which he cast off. Now those whom God seeks to be the new, inward, and

and spiritual worshippers (instead of the literal and outward), must come out of all other ways and gatherings, upon the many mountains, to the mountain of the Lord's house, and to the place of his gathering: the command is express, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you," &c. 2 Cor. vi. It is true, I seek you for worshippers, and I call you to the gospel-feast of fat things, and I will receive you if ye come; but ye must first come out from among all the false ways and false worshippers, and depart from, and not so much as touch, that which is unclean (the unclean spirit, his unclean ways and worshippers), and then I will receive you, and own you as my sons and daughters, and be a Father to you; not else. Mark now; The Jews outward, in their day, must be separate from all the Heathen outward, if they would be judged and owned by God for true worshippers according to the law. The primitive Christians were to separate from both Heathen and Jews too (even their temple, priests, and ordinances, which were once of God) if they would be worshippers, true worshippers under the gospel, worshippers of God's seeking. And the Christians, after the antichristian corruption and darkness, must come out of Babylon; that is, out of all forms of religion, and buildings out of the life and power (for that is Babylon, the city of confusion, which is built out of, stands out of, and practiseth out of, the order and unity of the Spirit), if they will be found worshippers in the day of restoration; after the long darkness of the apostasy, they must not worship the beast (nor worship God, as the beast teacheth and requireth; for in so worshipping, God is not worshipped, but the beast), nor bear his name, nor receive his mark, either on their forehead or right hand,

hand, nor be of the number of his name. Now the command is as express to come out of Babylon; that is, to separate from all antichristian ways and worships; as ever it was to separate from the Heathen and Jews; and there is no being a true worshipper in God's sight, but in the true way of separation from all false worshippers, who worship in forms and appearances of godliness, out of the life and power.

Now, oh! how precious it is to feel God's seeking, God's gathering, God's separating, God's teaching, leading, drawing into the truth, and true way of worship! For there are self-separations, which are out of the true spirit, life, and power. Yea, God may begin the separation, and another wisdom may step in, and carry it on, out of the limits of the sweet, innocent spirit, life, and power. Oh! blessed is he who is separated by the Lord from all that is not of him! But he that is but sensual, and hath not the spirit, but only by a literal knowledge separateth himself, he differeth from others but in the outward form and appearance of godliness; but is one in nature and ground with those whom he separateth from. Thus the Papists, and all pretended Christians (of the same spirit) who feel not the true Spirit, power, and life, are but one in the ground, how great soever their difference outwardly seem. And those that separate further and further (even to the utmost extent outwardly, or in the way of appearance) being not separated by the Lord from that nature and spirit wherein the enmity lodgeth, they are still inhabitants of one and the same city (for the city of Babylon is very large) and daughters of one and the same mother, even of the wisdom which is from beneath; which wisdom, in its highest exaltation, is far beneath the nature and true excellency of the pure and heavenly wisdom,

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even

even in its lowest and most contemptible appearance. Oh! blessed is the religion, the worship, the separation, the fear of the Most High God, the faith, the knowledge, which begins in the spirit and power (even in the evidence and demonstration of God's own Spirit), and which stands and abides therein! For herein are the children of light distinguished, and kept distinct (by God Almighty, who hath made the difference) from all the children of darkness.

1671.
About the 12th month.

By ISAAC PENINGTON,

Prisoner for the testimony of
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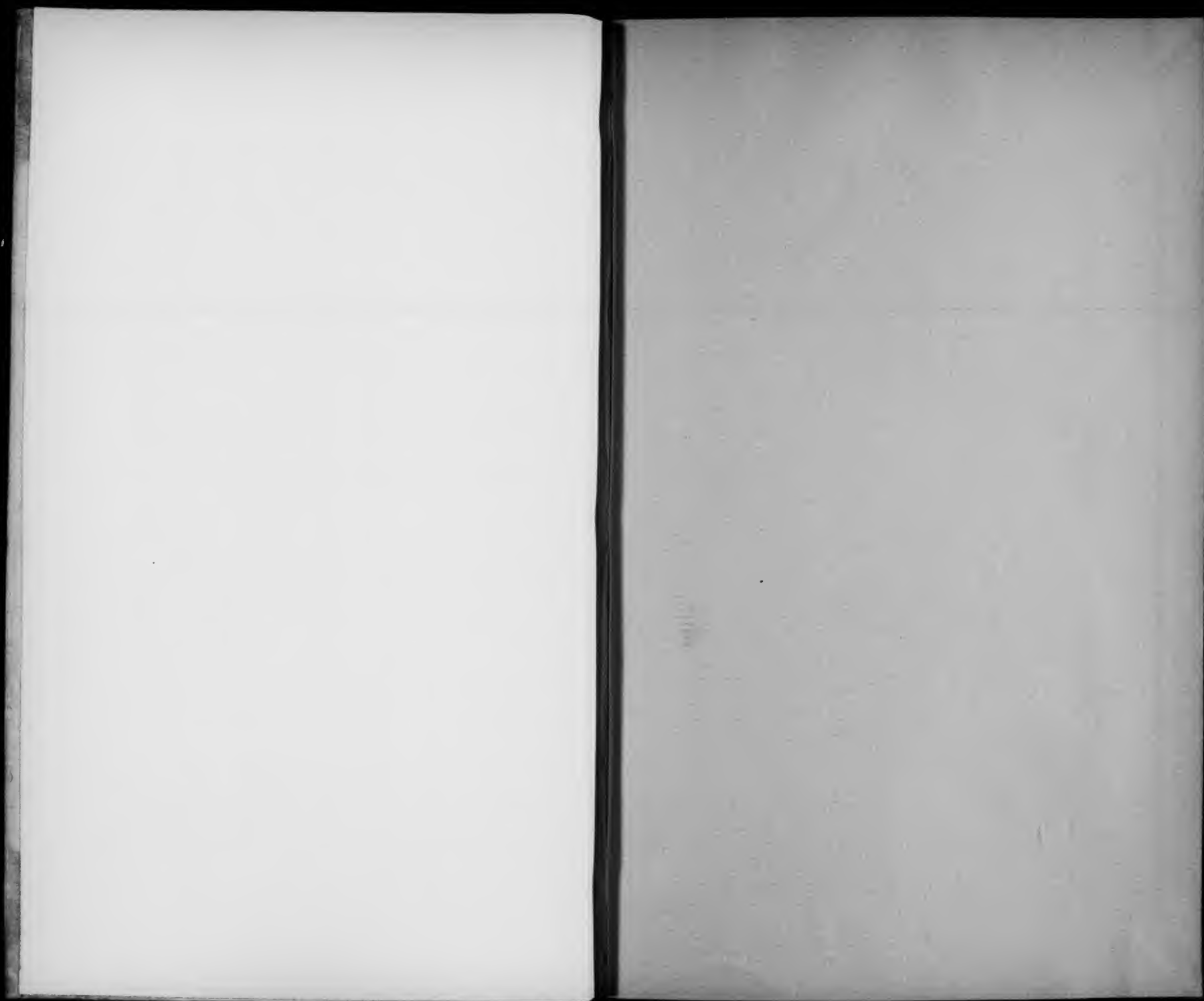
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